

The Representation of Ethiopian Politics in Selected Amharic Novels: 1930 - 2010.

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Declaration

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I declare that “The Representation of Ethiopian Politics in selected Amharic Novels: 1930 – 2010” is my own work and that all sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

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Signature

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Date

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Abstract

Amharic literature has always occupied an important place in the history of the literary traditions of Ethiopia. Although this literature is believed to be strongly related to the politics of the country, there has been no study that proves this claim across the different political periods in the country. It would be ambitious to deal with all the literary genres in this respect. Therefore, delimiting the investigation of the problem is considered to be useful to filling the knowledge gap. Accordingly, this comparative research which investigates a representation of Ethiopian politics in selected Amharic novels across three political periods: 1930 – 2010 was designed.

The objective of the research is to investigate the representation of Ethiopian politics in selected Amharic novels. The basic research question focuses on how these representations can be explained. An eclectic theoretical approach (the New Historicism, Bourdieu's System Theory and the Critical Discourse Analysis) is employed to understand the representations. The main method of data collection focuses on a close reading of non-literary and literary texts. A purposive sampling technique is used to select the sample novels as the technique allows to select those that yield the most relevant data using some criteria. Based on the criteria set, sixteen novels are selected. The manners in which the political events represented in the novels are examined using different parameters. The parameters also look into the methods used in representing the political events and the time in which the events were represented, i.e. whether they are represented contemporarily, post-contemporarily or before the actual happening of the event.

Having read the novels critically, the political events that took place in the three respective states are identified, analyzed and interpreted. The analysis mainly shows that different novels represented the political events in different manners: lightly or deeply, overtly or covertly, positively or negatively, contemporaneously or post-contemporaneously. Regarding the 'how' of the representations, it is observed that the critical novels, for instance, *Aliwäladim and Adäfris* are covert and use symbols, direct and indirect allusions and other figures of speeches, and other techniques including turn taking, and size of dialogues to achieve their goals. Some political events are found to be either under-represented or totally un-represented in the novels. In some cases, same political events are represented differently in different novels at different times. Some novels that criticized the political events of the governments contemporaneously have been removed from market, republished in the political period that followed and exploited by the emerging government for its political end.

There are some patterns observed in the analyses and interpretations of the politics in the novels. One of the patterns is that sharp criticisms on the events of an earlier political period are usually reflected in novels published in a new period. The critique novels of the Haileselassie government, for instance, *Maibäl Yabiyot Wazema*, were published during the Darg period, and those that were critical of the Darg government, for instance, *Anguz*, were published in the EPRDF period. Another pattern observed is that there is no novel that praises a past regime, even despite being critical of a contemporary government. No novel written during the Darg period admired the Haileselassie period; and no novel written during the EPRDF period appreciated the Darg period.

There are cases in which novelists who were critical of the contemporary Haileselassie and Darg periods, for instance, Abe and Bealu, respectively, ended up in detention or just disappeared and their novels, *Aliwälädim* and *Oromay*, respectively were banned from being circulated. Unlike the two previous political periods, the critique novels of the EPRDF period, for instance *Dertogada*, *Ramatohara*, and *Yäburqa Zimäta*, have been published, or even republished, several times. Novels written during the Haileselassie period, such as *Aliwälädim*, which were critical of the respective contemporary period, made their criticism covertly, using probes and imaginary settings and characters, while the critique novels of the EPRDF period, criticize overtly, and boldly. Generally, it could be concluded that the novels had the power to reflect history, and show human and class relationships implicitly, through the interactions of characters, story developments, and plot constructions, and the impact that politics has on the literature, and the influence of literature on politics.

Key terms: representation, novel, discourse, Ethiopian politics, history, context, censorship, power, New Historicism, System Theory, Critical Discourse Analysis, ideology, field, habitus, intertextuality, overt, covert, contemporary, post contemporary.

Symbols¹

The following symbols are used for the transliteration of Ethiopian words

Vowel	Symbol	Example
1 st order	ä	ዘፈነ zäfänä
2 nd order	u	ሁሉ hulu
3 rd order	i	ዛድ hid
4 th order	a	ራራ rarra
5 th order	e	ቤት bet
6 th order	ĩ	ግር ĩgĩr
7 th order	o	ሆድ hod
Consonant	Symbol	Example
ሸ	š	ሸሸ šäššä
ቀ	q	ቀቀ qoq
ቸ	č	ቸረቸረ čäräččärä
ኸ	ñ	ኸኸ ñoñño
ዝ	ž	ዝዝ žäž
የ	y	የተየ yittay
ጀ	ĵ	ጀግና ĵägna
ጠ	ṭ	ጠጣ ṭäṭṭa
ጨ	č'	ተንጫጫ tänč'ačč'a
አ	p'	አውሎስ p'awlos
ፀ	s'	ፀፀት s'äs'ät
ሚ	m ^w a	ላሚ lam ^w a

¹ The symbols except ĵ, and the examples are taken from Journal of Ethiopian Studies. But, in this research the Amharic letter “ጀ” is represented using the symbol “ĵ” for the researcher could not find the program/symbol used in the journal of Ethiopian Studies(December, 2000).

Acronyms

AESM – All Ethiopian Socialist Movement

COPWE – Commission for Organizing the Workers’ Party of Ethiopia

EDU – Ethiopian Democratic Union

ELF – Eritrean Liberation Front

EPLF – Eritrean People Liberation Front

EPRDF – Ethiopian People’s Revolutionary Democratic Front

EPRP – Ethiopian People’s Revolutionary Party

EOPRS - Ethiopian Oppressed Peoples’ Revolutionary Struggle

Ič’iat – Amharic acronym of (Yäityop’iya č’iqun hīzboč abiyotawi tīgīl (Ethiopian Oppressed Peoples’ Revolutionary Struggle) in that “I” stands for Ityop’ya, “č’i” stands for č’iqun hīzboč, “a” stands for abiyotawi and “t” stands for tīgīl.

Imaledih – Amharic acronym of Yäityop’iya Markisist Leninist dīrjitoč hībrät (Union of Ethiopian Marxist-Leninist Organizations) in that “I” stands for Ityop’ya, “Ma” stands for Marksist, “le” stands for Leninist, “dī” stands for dīrjitoč and “h” stands for hībrät.

Malerid - Amharic acronym of Marksist-Leninist rivolušinari dīrjīt (Marxist-Lennist Revolutionary Organization) in that “Ma” stands for Marksist, “le” stands for Leninist, “ri” stands for rivolušinari and “d” stands for dīrīgīt.

MOND –Ministry of National Defence

OLF – Oromo Liberation Front

POMOA – Provisional Office for Mass Organizational Affairs

RRC - Relief and Rehabilitation Commission

TPLF – Tigray People’s Liberation Front

WPE – Workers’ Party of Ethiopia

WSLF - Western Somalia Liberation Front

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Figure 1. Analytical Framework (p. 12)

Chapter One

Introduction

This chapter deals with the background of the research problem and rationale for the study, the research questions, objectives, significance of the study, limitations of the study, analytical framework and assumptions, the research design and the structure of the dissertation.

1.1. Background, the Research Problem and the Rationale

In Ethiopia, the history of Amharic creative literature can be traced to the beginning of the twentieth century, following the introduction of western education, printing press, and consequently the publication of newspapers and magazines. The first novel (1908²) and the first play (1912) were published and staged, respectively in the first two decades of the twentieth century (Taye, 1986: 7; Yonas, 1995: 93).

Irrespective of the changes in the political system in the century, Amharic literature has always occupied an important place in the history of the literary tradition of Ethiopia. However, as far as my reading is concerned, there has been no comprehensive research that shows the development of Amharic literature and the relationship between politics and the literature, not even a scanty research work that deals with comparative studies on the literatures of the different political periods is available. Of course, the overall history, themes and techniques of pre -1974³

² All the dates are written in the Gregorian calendar. “Bahire Hasab”, the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahido Church Calendar Program, has been used to change the Ethiopian calendar into the Gregorian calendar. Unless the month and the dates are specifically mentioned, the publication year stated in Ethiopian calendar is converted to the Gregorian calendar by adding eight years. The difference in years between the Ethiopian and the Gregorian calendars is seven/eight years. From September 11 – December 30 the difference is 8 years while January 1 - September 10 the difference is 7 years. As an illustration, the Ethiopian new year begins on Mäsikäräm 1 (September 11/12). So, Mäsikäräm 1, 2006 E.C. is September 11, 2013 in Gregorian calendar.

³ The year 1974 was an important year in the history of Ethiopia. The class struggle between the mass of people and the monarchy reached its climax, and this led to the February Ethiopian revolution, which resulted in the downfall of Emperor Haileselassie, and brought the Darg (the military junta that overthrew the king), to power. Under the guise of different names, the Darg ruled the country for 17 years, until it was forced out of power by the armed struggle of the Ethiopian People’s Revolutionary Democratic Front. The Darg chairman, the then president of the country, Colonel Mengestu Haile-Mariam, fled to Zimbabwe in May 1991. Following his evacuation, EPRDF came to power and rules the country to date. Thus, historically, the scope of this study includes three successive political or historical periods of Ethiopia ranging from the Imperial –to- the military Darg-to- incumbent EPRDF regimes.

Amharic literature have been studied with limited scope. However, post-1974 Amharic literature has not been adequately researched. Regarding the need for studying the history of Amharic literature, Yonas (2001: 36) states:

At this point the task of the Amharic literary scholar would yield better and useful results if it were directed toward producing a literary history, which must involve a serious examination of the social and intellectual climate(s) that informed its production as it evolved over the hundred odd years since the delivery of Afeework's *Tobbiya* in 1908.

Conducting research on the overall nature of Amharic literature, or making comparative study of the literature of the different political periods is not, of course, an easy task. Therefore, focusing on limited topics such as historical, thematic or technical aspects of a particular genre written in a given period can help in paving the way for wider studies of the history or characteristics of the literature and the relationship between politics and literature. Supporting this point, Yonas (2001: 38) explains that reading individual works by the same author first, and then by groups of authors, can make it possible to trace some kind of pattern that would later serve as a guide for developing a general framework for analyzing and interpreting the history of the literature. Based on such rationale this research made its focus on the representation of Ethiopian politics in Amharic novels (from 1930 to 2010): "*The Representation of Ethiopian Politics in selected Amharic Novels: 1930-2010*".

It is appropriate, at this stage, to give some description of the title with regard to the years that the study covered, and the contextual meaning in which the terms 'representation' and Ethiopian politics' have been used.

The novel is selected for the study since it depicts society, culture, and politics in depth more than the other genres. The year 1930 was chosen as the beginning, because it coincided with a new era in Ethiopian history, in that Haileselassie was inaugurated as the Emperor. There were also no significant number of novels published before 1930. Although the novel, *T'obbiya* was written earlier, it has been studied in terms of its form and religious and political contents by different

researchers like Taye (1995: 61-92) and Yonas (1995: 93-113). Accordingly, there was no felt need to include the pre- 1930 novels in this research.

The publication of Amharic novels continued after 1930, although the practice was interrupted because of the Italian occupation of Ethiopia from 1935 to 1941. With the restoration of freedom,

Ethiopians began to attempt the mother of all struggles: the construction of a viable country. Writers and poets became the vanguard for the construction of new paradigms of development, and also for the reinvention of culture...The period is marked by a tremendous out-pouring of literary production (Ali Jimale, 1995: 6).

The Amharic novel continued as an important genre from the imperial period of Haileselassie onwards. Therefore, this research was designed to study the representation of politics in selected Amharic novels written in three political periods -The Imperial (1930-1974), The Darg (February 1974-1991), and the existing, EPRDF (May 1991- 2010⁴).

The novel as a genre is an extended work of realistic fiction written in prose. It is a narrative characterized by “a greater variety of characters, greater complication of plot (or plots), ampler development of milieu, and more sustained exploration of character and motives (Abrams, 1999: 190).

In this study, the word ‘representation’ refers to the production and construction of meaning and knowledge out of discourses of literature, history and politics (Foucault, 1980 as paraphrased in Hall, 1997). Representation is thus an essential part of a process by which meaning and knowledge is produced and exchanged between members of a culture. It does involve the use of discourse, and power to produce and construct meaning and knowledge.⁵

The phrase, ‘Ethiopian politics’, is used to refer to the political history of the country, Ethiopia, and the major political events that happened during the three political periods.

⁴ The year starting from 1991 to 2010 indicates the range of the publications’ years of the novels selected for the study; otherwise, the EPRDF is still the ruling party of the present government.

⁵ More explanation of representation and discourse is given in chapter two.

As mentioned in the preceding paragraphs, works of literature in Amharic language started to be published towards the beginning of the 20th century. It is worth looking into the major developments that have taken place since that period. With regard to the novel, *T'obbiya* (1908) is known to be the first work of fiction written in Amharic. Following this novel, *Yalibe Hasab: Yäbrihanena Yäs'iyon Mogäs Gäbiča* and *Addis Aläm* were published by Hiruy Woldeselassie in 1931 and 1933, respectively. After the restoration of independence, some of the novels that were published until the end of the 1950s included *Ariaya* (named after the main character) (1949), *Agazi* (named after the main character) (1956), *İnidäwät'ač Qäräč* (1956), and *Lijinät Tämäliso Ayimät'am* (1957). These novels dealt with the war and some other related issues. After the 1950s, many notable novels like *Aliwälädim* (1963), *Fiqir İskämäqabir* (1966), *Yätewodiros İniba* (1966), *Kadmas Bašhagür* (1970), *Adäfris* (named after the major character) (1970) and *Yähilina Däwol* (1972) were also published. In general, it was in the second half of the 20th century that many novels were published, and following that, several novelists began to appear in the country.

Despite the growth in the number of literary works published, there were not many studies that dealt with the history and the overall development of the literature, or with the different genres, like the novel, and the relationships between politics and the literature.

There were some early studies that dealt with various Amharic literary genres written in the pre-1974 period. Gerard (1971) studied written Amharic literature of all genres published up to the 1950s (as cited in Taye and Shiferaw, 2000). Kane (1975) in his study, *Ethiopian Literature in Amharic*, discussed Amharic literature of all genres, from the beginning of the twentieth century to the 1970s. The study dealt with different themes of Amharic literature under the categories: "Moralistic - Didactic or 'Vehicular' Literature", "Love and marriage", "Education", "Historical Fiction", "Political Writing" and "Reflections of Traditional Culture".

"Tradition and Change in Ethiopia: Social and Cultural Life as Reflected in Amharic Fictional Literature ca. 1930-1974", by Molvaer (1980), basically examined the pre-revolution period Amharic novels, plays, and poems, i.e., literary works published in Haileselassie's period. It examined how social and cultural lives of the people are reflected in the literary works of twelve authors. Molvaer made some discussion on the

politics of Italo-Ethiopian war, the hope that the Emperor had inculcated in the people's mind, the ambitions of the authors for change, and the kinds of change projected in the literary works.

Kane's and some of the studies by expatriate researchers (Gerard, 1971; Molvaer, 1980, 1995) are criticized by Ethiopian scholars (Hailu, 1995; Taye and Shiferaw, 2000; Yonas, 2001) for making faulty assumptions and unwarranted generalizations, for the bibliographic nature of the writings, and for the invalid statements written about Amharic literature. For instance, Hailu (1995: 113) in his review of Molvaer's *Tradition and Change in Ethiopia* states: "previous studies of Amharic literature (e.g., Gerard, 1971; Kane, 1975) were chiefly bibliographic and made few valid statements concerning the literary aspects of Amharic fiction".

A PhD thesis entitled "*Realism and Amharic Literature (1908-1981)*" by Fikre (1983) discussed prose fictional works of 15 authors published between 1908 and 1981. The study classified the works into four periods, and analyzed them from the point of view of realism and socialist realism. The four periods were Amharic literature before the second Italo - Ethiopian war (1908-1935, represented by the novels of Afework and Heruy), the post-war period (1941-1956, represented by the fictional works of Girmachew, Mekonen Endalkachew, Woldegiorgis, and Assefa Gebremariam), the modern period (1957-1973, represented by the literary works of Tadesse, Birhanu, Negash, Bemnet, Abe, Hadis, Dagnachw and by the pre revolution novels of Bealu), and the period after the February 1974 revolution (1979-1981, represented by the post revolution novels of Bealu, Birhanu, and Tadele). Fikre gave no explanation regarding the methods or criteria used to categorize the literature into four different periods. The categorization, on the one hand, seems to be based on the political history of the country represented as the pre-war, the post-war and the post revolutionary periods, but, on the other hand, it used "modern" to refer to the third category, 1957 to 1973. The research should have strictly followed one method of categorization (either political history, or time) throughout. It should be noted that there is no a standard method of categorizing Amharic literature as it has not yet been thoroughly studied.

Fikre did not organize his study in terms of form or theme. Rather, he studied the works of the fifteen authors in a chronological order, beginning with the oldest. Hence, Afework's novel, *Lib Wäläd Tarik*, is discussed first, since it is the first

Amharic novel; perhaps there was no need to organize the categories in terms of the content and form of the novels, because Fiqre wanted to examine whether the historical, political, cultural, and social themes, the characterization, and the plot construction of the fictional works were realistic.

Some studies that followed the earlier writings include, an MA thesis by Olga (1981), *The State of the Short Story in Ethiopia*, Taye's PhD thesis (1986) *Form in the Amharic Novel*, and other MA theses by Girma (1994) *The Amharic Dime Novel: Its Emergence, Major Features and Significance 1949-1966* and Samuel (1994), *The Development of Modern Amharic Poetry (1950-1980)*. As can be observed from the titles, these studies showed a shift in focus, from the study of all-genres to specific genres or aspects of the literature, such as themes or technique/s, and on the works of individual authors (Taye and Shiferaw, 2000: 47). These researches, limited themselves to the study of specific genres and periods. For instance, Olga's (1981), MA thesis examined thematic and technical point of view of Amharic short stories published in books, magazines (like *Mänän*, *Yäkatit*, *Kum Nägär*) and newspapers, from the 1950s to 1970s; Taye's (1986) PhD thesis, investigated the forms of 10 novels published before the 1974 revolution.

More recent researchers further limited themselves to the study of selected author/s, theme/s, or literary technique/s within definite time frames. For instance, Assefa Zeru's (1996) *Literary Style and Historical Meaning: A Study of Three Amharic Historical Novels*, Agaredech's (1996), *Beliefs in Three Amharic Prose Fictions: A Structuralist Point of View*, and Wondwosen's (1998) *Incognitos of Christ in The Amharic Novel: A Critical Study of Archetypal Mimesis and Its Literary Functions Based on Two "Novels"* could be cited as examples of research works by writers who adopted a limited scope in their approaches. Taye and Shiferaw (2000: 47) commented on this change of perspective:

The shift from the tradition of presenting a historical overview of Amharic literature manifests itself most markedly in the studies carried out by younger students of Amharic literature. Unlike previous surveys which reviewed works in the various genres, these young disciples tended to deal with selected genres, authors, themes, or literary forms.

The value that such specific and subject-focused research works have for the literary scholarship of Amharic literature is immense, in that they enable indepth study of themes, styles, languages and techniques of the literary works.

There are a few research works that investigated politics in literary works that focused on a given short span of time. For instance, “*The Theme of the Italian Occupation in Major Amharic Novels and Plays*” by Zelalem Banti (1990, MA Thesis) discussed some plays and the novels, *Ariaya*, *Īnidāwāt’ač Qäräč*, *Baša Qūt’aw*, *Alimotikum Biyā Alwašim*, *Yāmayič’äw Qusläña*, *Agazi*, *Adabay*, and *Näs’anät*. Zelalem Getahun (1997) in his MA thesis entitled *Amharic Political Plays (1974-1981): a Contextual Study* discussed political themes of the Amharic plays produced within seven years of time.

“*The Post Revolution Amharic Novel: 1966-1975 E.C.*”(1989) by Taye Assefa is an article that investigated the thematic and formalistic features of eight novels, published in nine years, 1974 to 1983. The time in which these novels were written represents only the first half of the Darg period. Taye’s study focused on the formalistic and thematic aspects of the novels and attempted to identify weaknesses, contradictions and innovations found in the novels.

“*A Study of Some Major Characters and Themes in Post-Revolution Amharic Novels*”, by Getachew Sahilemariam (1985, MA Thesis) focused on two issues: major characters and themes. The novels covered in this study are *Maibäl*, a trilogy by Berhanu, *Wänjäläñaw Daña*, by Hadis, *Därasiw* and *Yäqäy Kokob T’irri*, by Bealu, *Läqäy Abäba*, by Tadele, and *Banid Därit Sosit T’ut*, by Deneke Asaye. All the novels were published between 1974 and 1982. Similar to that of Taye (1989), Getachew’s study only covered novels published in the first eight years of the Darg period.

“*Red Terror Inspired Prose Fiction: Character Analysis*” by Sileshi Tugi (2008) is an article which focuses on the analysis of characters in four post Darg Amharic novels and three short stories (one of which is written in English) published between 1992 and 1997. “Red Terror” seems to be the common subject that connects these novels and the short stories; but the focus of the article is on character analysis rather than the political subject, “Red Terror”. It deals with the portrayal of militant, authoritative

and female characters. The article is not pre-occupied with the theme of Red Terror as an outcome of historical or political situations.

There were also writings that dealt with political themes of fictional works. Ghirmai Negash's, *Literature and Politics in Ethiopia: a Case Study of Abe Gubanya's Alwelledim* (1995), is one such article that makes a political interpretation of the novel, *Aliwälädim*. The novel was written during Haileselassie's period, and made prediction of what would follow. In the article, Ghirmai revealed how the first part of the novel compares to the political situations of the Feudo – Bourgeoise period of Emperor Haileselassie, and how this led to the coup by the Darg. The second half of the novel, according to Ghirmai, is analogous to the socio-political situations of the Darg period in relation to land ownership, democracy, media and censorship. Ghirmai, in doing the comparisons, used different co-texts to validate his analysis; he used documents from historical and other reports. Ghirmai further subtly relates the events after the second coup, to the period of the EPRDF government (1995: 152).

"From Apologist to Critic: The Dilemma of Bealu Girma" (1995) by Tadesse Adera, is an article that deals mainly with Bealu and his novel, *Oromay*. The novel makes verisimilitude of a political event named the Red Star Multifaceted Revolutionary Campaign, conducted in Eritrea by the Darg, in 1981 to destroy the Eritrean Peoples Liberation front, (EPLF). The article explains the courage of the author who showed in writing such "novel with a key"⁶, based on the true behaviours of the top Darg ministers and officials who were stationed in Asmara to run the campaign. Most of the characters are portrayed as corrupt, ignorant and self-loving persons who have been selected to the position not by merit but only because of their political affiliation. The novel discloses the agony that the people of Eritrea suffered during the Darg period. Tadesse contrasted the courage that the writer showed in *Oromay* to the apologist stance that was shown in his previous novel, *Yäqäy Kokob T'irri*.

In general, the review made so far indicates that there was no significant study on the overall development of Amharic literature, and on the relationship between literature and politics. It could also be observed that no comparative study has been made on the

⁶ 'Novel with a key' is a work of prose fiction which the author expects the knowing reader to identify, despite their altered names, actual people of the time.

literature across periods. Thus, there are knowledge gaps in these areas. Critical studies that comprehensively deal with the history of the Amharic literature, the relationship that the literature had with politics, and comparative studies across periods could have many benefits. Firstly, they could help us analyze the changes in themes and techniques of writing across the different political and historical epochs, and could inform us whether historical, political and social changes have any impact on the literature, and vice versa. Secondly, critical research works are important to compare and contrast the literatures of two or more consecutive political periods in a given society.

This study, therefore, attempted to fill the gap in this respect. Nevertheless, studying the history of the literature, and the relationships between the literature and the politics as represented in all genres of literature is not an easy task to perform. Thus, there was a need to limit the scope of the study to only one genre of Amharic literature i.e. the novel. The study investigated the influences of political history and the novel on each other across the three political periods in Ethiopia. It is for this reason that this research focused on investigating the representations of Ethiopian politics in Amharic novels (from 1930 to 2010).

1.3. Research Questions

This study mainly focused on analyzing and interpreting the representation of Ethiopian politics in Amharic novels. The major research question that the study wanted to answer was how the representation of the politics of Ethiopia in Amharic novels could be explained. More specifically, the study formulated the following research questions:

- What are the specific political events represented in Amharic novels of each political period?
- How are the specific political events of the different periods represented in the novels?
- Is there any observable trend with regard to the representations of politics in Amharic novels along the years?
- What are the commonalities and differences with regard to the representations of the politics in the novels of the three successive political periods?

- Which novels were contemporary to the respective political period in which they were written, and which ones were written after the period to which they referred?
- How did the political contexts and the discourses of the novels influence one another during the three political periods?

1.4. Objectives

This study aimed to explore how Ethiopian politics in three distinct political periods were represented in selected Amharic novels. It intended to add to the existing body of knowledge of Amharic literature, by creating awareness on how the political history of the country is represented in Amharic novels.

This study had the following specific objectives:

- To identify specific political events represented in the Amharic novels written in the three consecutive political periods,
- To explain how the political events are represented in the novels,
- To identify patterns of representations of the politics in the novels,
- To compare and contrast how the political events of each period are represented in their respective contemporary Amharic novels,
- To identify political events represented in contemporary and post contemporary novels; that is, which novels represent political events that had happened in the previous period/s and the period after a change in government was made,
- To examine the influence of political contexts on the political discourses of the selected novels and investigate the impact of the novels on the contexts.

1.5. Significance of the Study

This study could have a number of advantages. Firstly, the study could be taken as part of a study of the history of Amharic novel, and the relation that exists between the politics of Ethiopia and Amharic literature. It can serve as a resource material for literature course instructors, students and researchers on Ethiopian literature. For example, as an instructor of Amharic literature courses, the researcher is aware of the shortage of rich references on Survey of Amharic/Ethiopian Literature, Amharic Novel, and Practical Literary Criticism. Secondly, the study could help us analyze

changes in the pattern of representation of the politics in the novels across the different political and historical epochs, and may inform readers whether the historical, political and social changes have had any impact on the literature and vice versa. Thirdly, it may, contribute to a wider academic discourse of Amharic novel/literature at the level of international scholarship. Fourthly, the study may also enable us to make comparisons and contrasts between the literatures of the two or more consecutive political periods of the society, in terms of relationships between the politics and the novel. Lastly, it may show the relevance of integrating different critical approaches in studying the discourses of literary texts and contexts.

1.6. Delimitations and Limitations of the Study

The study focused on investigating representations of the politics of Ethiopia in selected Amharic novels that were published in the three successive political periods. These novels were selected and discussed from the point of view of their representations of the politics of the respective governments. The writing style of the authors and the writing techniques used in the novels were not discussed, unless they had some relevance to the main purpose of the study.

Interview was designed as one of the instruments for collecting data, even with the realization that it would not be easy to interview novelists, press officials and leaders of writers' associations of the Imperial and the Darg periods. However, there was hope that it would be possible to conduct interviews with some writers, press officials as well as writers' associations of more recent years. Unfortunately, the interview was doomed to failure. Some writers did not respond to requests made to them through emails, telephones, and through third person; even those who had given their consent through email failed to respond to the questions sent to them. There was one female novelist who was willing for the interview. But the data obtained from one individual could not be valid for the study. Hence, the research was limited to only a closer reading of the novels and other documents. Although the interview was meant to get further data on the experiences of authors, the role of the press and writers' associations, the researcher believes that it did not significantly affect the study as a whole.

Finally, it is worth mentioning that the three conceptual frameworks (New Historicism, Bourdeau's System Theory, and Critical Discourse Analysis) share common elements, and could be used in combination in the analysis and interpretation of the novels. However, in this study, the focus they were given in the analyses and interpretations of the politics was not the same; each conceptual frame work was used to frame the analyses whenever the need arose. Effort was also made to understand some novels in terms of their respective authors' experiences when ever situations allowed to do so. For instance, it was possible to understand the experiences of some authors from their autobiographies and biographies.

1.7. Analytical Framework and Assumptions

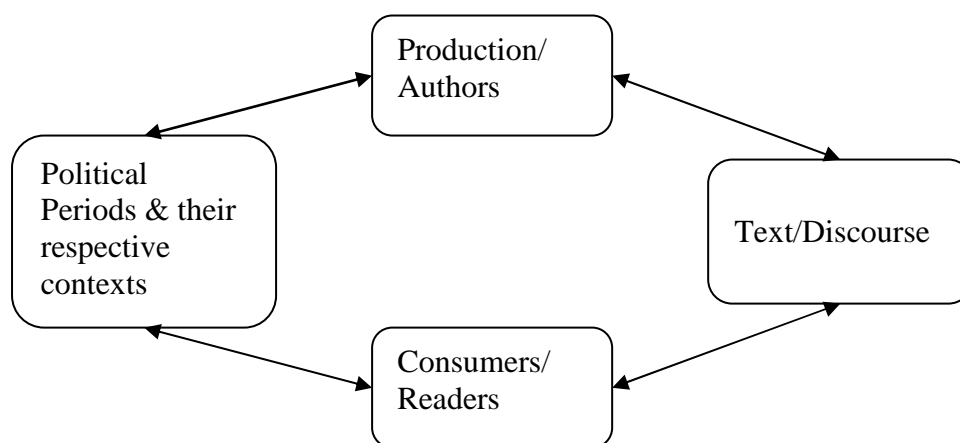


Fig.1. Analytical Framework

The analytical framework for the study is drawn by taking into consideration the thoughts of critical discourse analysts, new historicists, and sociologists of literature (Fairclough, 1995, 2001 & 2003; Greenblatt in Payne (ed), 2005; and Bourdeau, 1993, 1996 accordingly).

The following assumptions are drawn from the analytical framework (Fig.1.). First, every government has its own political, cultural and historical contexts. These contexts shape productions/authors in different degrees. Authors and their fictional works not only could positively or negatively reflect and represent contexts in their works; they also influence contexts in different degrees. Secondly, contexts also shape consumers/readers in different degrees; critical readers understand texts or construct ideas with a closer reading of texts. However, without the knowledge of contexts, readers could not understand the text fully. Sometimes, readers' knowledge about the background and intentions of the authors could help them understand texts effectively. Thirdly, critical readers can be shaped by texts. They construct ideas and themes from

their reading; they learn something from texts. Fourthly, critical readers should use both internal and external data (internal and external discursive practices) to understand texts critically. Fifthly, readers influence contexts in various degrees. They might be influenced by what they read and in turn take part in the struggle held to change the existing traditional contexts. Lastly, relationships exist between systems; for instance, relationship between the politics and the literature. This means that politics could have influence on literature, and vice-versa.

1. 8. Research Design

1.8.1. Paradigm and Approach of the Study

To investigate the representation of the politics of Ethiopia in Amharic novels, the study used a combination of different critical theories, namely New Historicism, Bourdeau's System Theory and Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis (these theories are discussed in chapter two, as conceptual frameworks). With a closer reading of the selected novels and related contemporary non-literary texts such as historical, political and legal documents based on the three critical approaches, different ideas and themes on representation of political events were constructed. Thus, the research used the constructivism paradigm as a basis for analyzing the literary works.

The constructivism paradigm or epistemology asserts that meaning is constructed in mind through social interactions (Jupp, 2006: 38 - 40). A researcher's experience, knowledge, and social and cultural interactions are factors that lead to construct reality in a certain way. This means that there is no single understanding of reality; there might be rather different understandings of a certain reality depending on the nature of the exposure of a researcher to various human or cultural experiences and involvement in various fields.

The study also used a qualitative method as it enabled to carry out an investigation of qualitative phenomena, a representation of political events in Amharic novels. More specifically, the study employed hermeneutics (particularly literary hermeneutics) research method since the concerns of the study were describing, interpreting and analyzing critically the representations of the politics of Ethiopia in Amharic novels published in the three different historical periods. This method enabled the researcher

to conduct an intensive investigation of patterns of representations of politics in the novels, and the relationships of politics and novels in those periods in Ethiopia. It also allowed the researcher to describe the political events represented in the novels, how they were represented, and to identify patterns observed in the representations across the periods.

The study was not limited to the description of phenomena. It further extended its scope to making interpretations of language and tried to figure out the representations stated implicitly using different mechanisms like tropes: metaphors, symbols, and allusions. The novels were further studied intertextually and in their historical and political contexts. Comparative study of the novels written in the three periods with respect to the manner and pattern of representation of politics was also made.

Hermeneutics tradition could go beyond mere descriptions of core concepts and essences to look for meanings. Hermeneutics makes possible the study of parts in relation to the whole and vice versa; it enables to interpret contextually and consider temporality. For hermeneutics and literary hermeneutics researchers (also for critical discourse analysts such as Fairclough, 1992: 4-15; Blommaert and Bulcaen, 2000: 454; Wodak and Meyer, 2001: 16 -17), there is no absolute meaning and reality; any text is open to different interpretations and meanings (Martin, 1972: 109; Longxi, 1992: 191; Szondi, P. & Bahti, T., 1978). Thus, this study followed the hermeneutic approach to describe, analyze and interpret the representation of political events in the novels.

1.8.2. Selection of Sample Novels

A purposive sampling technique was used to select the novels that represented politics. Accordingly, the following criteria were set. Firstly, political events that were considered to be very significant in a given political period were identified, based on readings of historical research works and legal documents. Then, novels in which the identified political events were represented were distinguished. In cases where there were two or more novels that represent a certain political event, the most ‘canonical’⁷

⁷ There are no criteria or concerned institute or any other body to decide the literary canon. There are not even permanent traditions of literary competitions and awards, except the Haileselassie I Prize Trust, a highly selective international award. There is no permanent award given in the Darg and EPRDF periods. Therefore, the novels that have been written by experienced authors (published for a

were selected. In other words, novels that were believed to have a wider recognition among literary academics and the reading public, and those that were written by more famous and experienced authors, and novels republished for several times were selected.

In cases where there are novels written by female and male writers about a certain political event, effort has been made to include a representative female author in the list, whether her novel was canonical or not, because novel by a female writer might give data or meaning which is different from male writers.

In some cases, factors like years of publications were considered for the selection of the sample novels, because the temporal change (especially the change in the governments) might bring a change in the representation of the political events. The selection of the novels further considered the political themes or ideas reflected in them- whether they seemed to favor or opposed the respective political regimes. Finally, the list of the selected novels was commented upon by four experienced literature course instructors at Bahir Dar and Dilla Universities, and by the co-supervisor of the study, who is an expert in the field (see the appendixes⁸).

In general, some canonical novels that are identified as politically oriented and classified as being either supportive or critical of their respective political periods, and novels representing the same political events, but were published in different years are included in the final list. This list includes a representative female author.

Based on the procedure above, 16 novels were selected for the study. The selected novels include: *Ariaya* (1949), by Girmachew Teklehawariyat, *Agazi* (1956) by Woldegiorgis Woldeyohannes, *Aliwälädim* (1963) by Abe Gubegna, *Adäfiris* (1970) by Dagnachew Worku, *Baša Qit'aw* (1974) by Sahleselassie Birhanemariyam, *Yäqäy Kokobi T'irri* (1980) and *Oromay* (1975), by Bealu Girma, *Maibäl Yabiyot Wazema*,

number of times), studied by critics, included in school curriculums, often discussed in literature classes, read on mass media and those works widely known by the public for their political themes are taken as more canonic in this research.

⁸ The Amharic course instructors are specialists in Amharic Literature and have taught different Amharic literature courses for 7 to 15 years. Especially their experiences in teaching the courses, Amharic Novel and Survey of Amharic literature are believed to help them in give comments on the selection of the novels.

Maibäl Yabiyot Mäbača, *Maibäl Yabiyot Magist* (trilogy), (1978, 1981, 1983), by Berhanu Zerihun, *Tamra T'or*(1983) by Gebeyehu Ayele, *Anguz* (1992) by Tsehay Melaku, *Yäburqa Zimäta* (2000) by Tesfaye Gebreab, *Dertogada* (2008), and *Ramato-hara* (2009) by Yismaeke Worku, and *Filmiya* (2009) by Ashine Getachew. As a university instructor of Amharic literature, the researcher had read the sixteen novels and many others even before the selection was made.

1.8.3. Methods of Data Collection

The main method of data collection was a thorough reading of the selected novels and other related non-literary documents. The novels and other historical and political writings on the respective political events were read closely and investigated in-depth.

1.8.4. Methods of Data Analysis

The data were analyzed based on the three theoretical approaches- New Historicism, System Theory, and Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis. New Historicism and System Theory are not used for examining literary texts in isolation; they rather enable to relate the texts to the outer-context; or to the political, historical and cultural contexts of the respective political periods as both New Historicism and System theory assume the interrelationships of systems (Brannigan, 2001: 172 - 173; Tiwary and Chandra, 2009: 80). For instance, Bourdeau's System Theory enabled this researcher to discuss the discourse further in relation to the forms of the novels and other related systems. For Bourdeau's System Theory, the form and content of literature are interrelated while contexts, background of the authors, in system theorist's terms, the field, habitus and capital are helpful to understand literary texts and the history of literature. Censorship, critics, publishers and the market could also be relevant actors in the system; therefore, they have to be considered in analyzing literary texts (Johnson, 1993: 9; Boscheti, 2006: 145 - 146). In addition, Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis method enabled the researcher to examine the literary discourses through their language use; the tropes used in the discourses were investigated and analyzed when it was found necessary.

There were certain parameters that were used in analyzing and interpreting the novels. The first step was to identify the political events represented in the novels. Then, the events were examined using different parameters that were related to the manners of

representations of the political events in the novels: how are the political events represented in the novels? Are they represented fully or partly? Are they represented in a light or detailed way? Do the writers reflect the whole history of a political event neutrally, or do they take sides, by either supporting or opposing a political group? Are the representations plausible or distorted, in relation to the actual historical event? Are the representations explicit or implicit? What methods were used to represent the political events explicitly? What mechanisms (e.g., tropes, silence, shapes of paragraphs, literary techniques) are followed to represent the events in the novels implicitly? When are the events represented (e.g., in their contemporary period, post contemporary period or before the actual event happened)?

The data obtained in such enquiries were analyzed and interpreted in accordance to the concepts and frameworks discussed in chapter two. Extracts taken from the novels for illustration purposes were translated into English using a communicative translation method. This translation method attempts to produce the exact message of the source text with emphasis on acceptability to the target text readership (Newmark, 1991)

1.8.5. Credibility and Trustworthiness of the Research

To ensure the quality of the research, different techniques were employed at several stages of the study. A lot of effort was made to create integration among the different parts of the research. For example, the research questions were related closely to the purposes of the research and the research design. The paradigm, methods of the research, and the analyses were carefully designed so that the researcher could collect appropriate data and make convincing and credible analyses. Three different but related theories were also employed as mechanisms for analyzing and identifying the research themes. Two workshops at Bahir Dar University were also organized at the department and faculty levels and relevant feedback was generated from the presentation of the draft report.

1.9. Structure of the Dissertation

The dissertation consists of seven chapters. Chapter one is the introduction. This chapter presents the statement of the problem, the research questions, general and specific objectives, significance of the study, limitations of the study and the methods

of the research. Chapter two describes theoretical concepts related to politics, literature, and the representation of political events in novels. In addition, the nature of the critical approaches of New Historicism, Bourdeau's System Theory of literature (or the sociology of literature) and Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis method are discussed. Chapter two further deals with the context of the study, the three periods of governance in Ethiopia: Haileselassie, Darg and EPRDF. Chapters three and four deal with analyses and interpretations of the political issues represented in the selected novels of the Imperial period. The third chapter deals specifically with the politics of the pre-war and the war periods (1930-1941) while the fourth chapter discusses the politics of the post liberation period (1941-1974).

Chapter five presents political issues represented in the selected novels of the Darg period. Besides discussing the political issues representing this period, this chapter also compares and contrasts the novels of the Darg and Haileselassie period. The sixth chapter deals with the analyses and interpretations of the representations of the politics of the EPRDF in the selected novels published in the period. The chapter further deals with similarities and differences in the state of representations of the political events of the selected novels of the three political periods. Moreover patterns that emerged in the representations of politics in the novels across the three periods are investigated in this chapter. The last chapter presents the summary of the research, and conclusions of the study based on the findings of the study.

Chapter Two

Theoretical Concepts and the Context of the Study

This chapter has two major parts. The first part is concerned with the theoretical concepts related to the study. The second part discusses the context of the study.

2.1. Theoretical Concepts

2.1.1. Introduction

This section discusses theoretical concepts that are relevant for the study. These concepts revolve around politics, literature and history. Ideas that deal with the representation of literary works and the relationships between literature, politics, and history are also explained. To be specific, the section describes literature and the state, mechanisms of controlling literature and the arts, escaping mechanisms of authors from censorship, and literature and the representation of politics. The concepts are described to clarify their meanings within the context of the research. The section further deals with the three literary critical theories, New historicism, Bourdieu's System theory and Critical Discourse Analysis because they have been used as the tools for the analyses and interpretations of the novels. Using the literary critical theories as the tools for the study made it possible to meet the objectives of the research.

2.1.2. Literature, Politics and History

Literature refers to the imaginative, creative and aesthetic writing organized in the form of drama, verse or prose (Wolfrey, 2002: 62). The novel, which is the concern of this study, is one of the genres of creative literature in prose characterized by a long story, detailed life of a character or a greater variety of characters, broad setting and ideas as well as by complexity of plots. The rise and development of the novel are related to the rise of realism which focuses on real life of people (Abrams, 1999: 190-196).

Politics is a broad term that can be defined in different ways. However, it is generally applied to the art or science of running governmental or state affairs. Politics can also be observed in social systems, in group interactions, and in religious institutions. It consists of social relations involving authority or power and refers to the regulation of

public affairs within a political unit. In other words, politics is the struggle as well as the exercise of power in social systems or institutions (Bunge, 2009: 2).

Connolly and Haydar (2008: 88 - 89) explained the problem of making a distinction between what is political and what is not, and they categorized politics into two views: the narrow and the broad. The narrow view refers to the politics that is concerned with the nature and legitimacy of the state, government, legal and other coercive institutions. The broad view is concerned with power relations between social groups that are mediated through attitudes. Otherwise, Connolly and Haydar (2008: 89) believe, “the distinction between the political and non-political may not be cut-and-dried”. In this research, politics by and large is related to the narrow view i.e. the political history of the country, or the governments, relationships between the views of the political groups and the literature, and the discursive political practice like censorship. But sometimes, relationships between ethnic groups and classes are studied, since they are related closely to the state narrow politics.

The fundamental issue lies on the relationships between politics and literature. The relationships between literature and politics can be discussed from different angles. It can be discussed in terms of the subject of the literature, which can be political, like state politics, party politics, country politics, and world politics. It can also be discussed along the lines of ethnic politics, colonialism, neo-colonialism, or racism. On the other hand, some theoreticians (like the new historicists, system theorists and discourse analysts) assert that literature is discourse and discourse is power; therefore, literature as discourse reveals power relationships and constitutes politics (Bertens, 2001: 178-184; Abrams, 1999: 182-188). Accordingly, Wa Thiongo (1981: 72) asserts, “politics is hence part and parcel of this literary territory”. Wa Thiongo (1981: 71) further elaborates the relationship between literature and politics in the following way:

Imaginative literature in so far as it deals with human relationships and attempts to influence a people’s consciousness and politics, in so far as it deals with and is about operation of power and relationship of power in society, are reflected in one another, and can and do act on one another.

For Ngugi, since literature deals with human power relationships, it cannot be free from politics. As members of a class society or as this or that institute, it is inevitable

for writers to reflect relationships that are practised in the society. As creations of their respective culture and class, they consciously or unconsciously usually favor their own groups. It is impossible for a writer to be free from politics. This point is emphasized by Wa Thiongo (1981: 73) who says:

Even where the writer has not ordinarily been actively immersed in politics, i.e. in a situation where the writer does not consciously see himself in terms of political activism either as an individual citizen or in the subject matter of his literary concern, he may well find himself suddenly involved in the hot political power struggles of the day.

Ngugi's assertion that a writer is inevitably immersed in politics is true, as far as Ethiopian writers of Amharic literature are concerned. For instance, institutions of art and some authors during the Darg period were cognizant of the government's ideology of socialism worked for its realization, while some others reflected opposing ideas.

New historicists believe that the literary text can be studied together with the political and historical texts that deal with the same issue (Bertens, 2001: 176-177; Wolfrey, 2001: 104; Dogan, 2005: 82). The literary text can be an input to the political and historical understandings, and the political and the historical contribute to the literary subject. White (2006: 25), regarding the relationship of literature and history states, "in general, literature – in the modern period – has regarded history not so much as its other as, rather, its complement in the work of identifying and mapping a shared object of interest, a real world which presents itself to reflection under so many different aspects....".

Literature is believed to give society sharper insights into the moving spirit of an era, through the interaction of character and social environment. This is very true to "the novel in particular, especially in its critical realist tradition . . . It is both analytic and synthetic" (Wa Thiongo, 1981: 72).

There are contemporary novels which deal with contemporary local and world political issues that give new insights and fresh knowledge to its respective readers (White, 2006: 25 – 26). There are also novels which expose problems of governments, parties, groups of societies. Even they try to point out alternative solutions to such

problems. Both history and politics might not be effective in identifying and exposing contemporary problems or giving insights to the contemporary people, because history usually deals with the past, while in undemocratic society contemporary critical political writings sometimes cost the life of writers, and therefore, writers lose courage to involve themselves in political writing. But novels, using rhetoric language, tropes and other fictional elements could reflect and represent not only what happened but also what it felt like creatively; however, creative reading is essential to identify the events and feelings on the part of readers (White, 2006: 26 - 27).

According to Dogan (2005: 82), the relationship between history and literature is seen as dialectic: the literary text is interpreted as a product and producer, end and source of history. This is true for new historicists. The relationship between literature and history can be described in different ways. First, literature can be said to be a product of history; it is in the history of civilization of a society that literature emerges and grows. Second, literature always constitutes history, because literature deals with human life and nature, and consequently, it cannot be free from history.

Literary work may reflect historical facts without prior intention of writing real historical facts. Writers do not bring the subjects of their writing from a vacuum; their sources are always the real lives of people - their victory, defeat, catastrophe, love, hate, philosophy, politics, and interactions. The subjects also include the nations of the past and the present. These subjects are part of the history of a people, a nation, an individual, an event, etc. Therefore, though the degree may vary, this kind of literary work can also be considered as a historical document. In this study literature as a representation of the political history of the country was investigated.

The reliability of historical and political data in literary works may be weak or strong. Reliability and validity of literary works can also be conditioned by several factors such as the philosophy of the authors, political affiliations of the authors, their knowledge of the subject, the experiences of readers, censorship and the context of reading the literary works. Because of these factors, historical and political facts might or might not be represented effectively and adequately in fictional works. In some literary works, historical facts may be stumbled across, while in others they may be deliberately constituted in enough detail.

2.1.3. Literature and State

The relationship between literature and state could be understood in terms of the role that literature plays in a given political system. Some governments and its institutions of art promote programs and policies that they want to be implemented in different sectors, through literature. They use literature to create awareness about changes designed to bring about in the political system, in the institutions, and in the societies. They also use it to create a sense of unity among different social and political groups and ethnicities. They use it to arouse the spirit of the people to stand together against poverty, corruption, invasion and other political and religious matters.

Some dictatorial states and their loyal art institutions use art and literature to defend their wrongs, to assure that their political regime is safe, or to assure that there is no danger that threatens the well-being of the state, their policy, and their political power. They make their loyalist writers do this. With regard to this point, Hollander (1976: 216) states, “the rulers of thoroughly politicized societies have been determined to use the arts and literature in particular as an arm in the propaganda process in order to solidify their power”.

Unlike the dictators and their loyal art institutions, some individual writers may use literature to criticize the rule and the politics of a country, to expose the wrongs of a state and to blame some of its policies which they consider inappropriate. They expose some political intrigues that might endanger the well-being of the country and the people; they might question treaties and diplomatic relationships that are signed; they expose corruption and treason. They might also use literature to warn the people and the state against possible problems or obstacles that they may face, or to forward alternative solutions to problems.

Cognizant of such roles that literature can play, some governments and states strive to control literature using different mechanisms. One of these mechanisms is the use of censorship. Undemocratic governments set censor laws that enforce writers to act according to the rules and regulations set in their censor laws. These laws inspect print and publication houses. They might even go to the extent of controlling writers' associations through some loyal leaders. States might monopolize the publication and circulation of books. If, by chance, some political writings escape censorship, they might be banned from circulation or sale and get destroyed after some days. The

authors may also be imprisoned, exiled, tortured or killed. Hollander (1976: 217) states:

Art (or what is left of art when such attempts are being made) can be and has been subordinated to politics in various ways. At a minimum, the rulers can simply proscribe the intrusion of ideas they consider undesirable and can prevent the writers' political ideas from gaining literary expression. This is simple censorship and is designed to eliminate unorthodox political content from the arts and to keep them safely apolitical.

However strong the controlling mechanism might be, and how difficult the situations are, some authors do not retreat from writing what is in their mind. They design various mechanisms to escape the censorship and get their works published. Such writers, especially those who write from inland may, for example, play through words. Those writers who are in exile might get their books published abroad and may reach local readers through black markets. They might also upload the literature online so that online readers may read or download them.

Readers, on their part, are expected to interpret and understand novels that implicitly represent political reality from different angles. They are expected to read between lines and understand the symbols, references, and allusions in contexts; they need to take into account various styles and forms of writing that tend to avoid overt representation.

2.1.4. Literature and Representation of Politics

Although literary works are the products of imagination, most of them cannot be outside the realm of experiences of people. They focus on history, religion, culture, politics and economy of a definite society; they also deal with gender, ethnicity, nationalism, patriotism, and treason; they show the everyday life experiences of people, such as love, hate, marriage, revenge, corruption, war, fear, courage, and hope. These subjects are represented in literature in different manners so that readers could feel and accept them as real.

Representation in fiction refers to the depiction of real life situations and events through language as constructed by the authors. In Hall's (1997: 16) words, representation is "the production of the meaning of the concepts in our minds through

language. It is the link between concepts and language which enables us to refer to either the 'real' world of objects, people or events, or indeed to imaginary worlds of fictional objects, people and events"(1997: 17).

In fact, there is no consensus on how reality is represented. Hall (1997: 24) discussed three different approaches of representation: reflective, intentional, and constructivist. The reflective philosophy regards representation as equivalent to a mirror reflection of an object. For the followers of this philosophy, reality is in the actual world, in the people, in the object and in the event. In short, for them reality is outside the text. Authors write what they have observed and experienced in the real life situations in fictional works. Therefore, the task of a reader is to learn and share those represented realities or experiences of the authors. The intentional theory of representation, on the other hand, relates reality to the intentions of authors. Here, language is used to express only what writers intend to write or communicate to readers; and readers are expected to identify those intentions and goals of the writers. The constructionist theory demands production and construction of reality by means of language and discourse on the part of the writers and the readers. Among the constructionists, for instance, Foucault is interested in discourse as a system of representation. Discourse (as mentioned in the introduction part) is not purely a linguistic aspect; it is rather about language and practice. For Foucault, discourse refers to a group of statements which provide a language for talking about - a way of representing the knowledge about - a particular topic at a particular historical moment (Hall, 1997: 44).

Hall (1997: 44) argues that discourse constructs the topic. It defines and produces the objects of our knowledge. It also influences how ideas are put into practice and are used to regulate the conduct of others. A discourse rules in certain ways of talking about a topic, defining an acceptable and intelligible way to talk, write, or conduct oneself. Thus, by definition, it does rule out limits and restricts the ways of talking, of conducting ourselves in relation to the topic, or constructing knowledge about it.

This research followed the constructivist approach, because all the three theoretical approaches of literary analysis selected for the study, that is, New Historicism, Bourdieu's System Theory and the theory of Critical Discourse Analysis belong to the post structuralist constructive approaches. Hall's (1997: 15) idea about the constructivist approach which says that "it is this perspective which has had the most

significant impact on cultural studies in recent years” is a further justification for following the approach in this study.

Politics can be represented in literary works like novels in a variety of ways. It can be represented fully or partly, explicitly or implicitly, in a general or detailed manner. Writers reflect real political events just as they are constructed in the actual historical setting or reading, while some others distort the actual reality, intentionally. Thus, sometimes, political events might be under-represented, and some other times, they might be over-represented, intentionally or not. In some fictional works, writers reflect the whole history of a political event neutrally, without taking any position, and in other fictional works, writers may represent a political event by taking sides, either supporting or opposing a political group.

Writers may even go to the extent of exposing political intrigues that have not been disclosed to the people. They may show the political intrigue explicitly through the lives, thoughts and deeds of characters, or through the commentary of authorial or character narrators. Details of the political event - the actual setting (the specific time and place in which the political event occurred) the authorities involved in the event, the cause and the consequence might be reflected thoroughly in novels.

As there are writers who write novels during the occurrence of the political events, there are also writers who, for several reasons, publish their novels after the decline of a political regime. One reason why such writers do not publish their works contemporaneously might be the lack of opportunities to get published. However, writers may also lack courage to confront possible dangers that might come from the governments, state apparatuses or authorities under the guise of the law. Therefore, some writers publish their works soon after the decline of that political regime.

2.1.5. Conceptual Framework of the Study

The conceptual frameworks that were used in this study were New Historicism, Boudieu’s System Theory and the Critical Discourse Analysis. Each of them is discussed in detail.

2.1.5.1. New Historicism

New Historicism is a literary critical approach and theory that emerged in America in the early 1980s with the intention of breaking the literary rules that make distinctions between literature and its contexts and between literary and non-literary texts, practices that were adhered by the approaches of new criticism, formalism and structuralism (Baldic, 2001: 171-172). New criticism, formalism and structuralism are characterized by their neglect of contexts - historical and cultural contexts in which works of literature are produced. The new historicists, irrespective of their differences, introduced the purpose of changing intrinsic reading and bringing the sociological aspect of literature to life in the literary academy. New Historicism attends primarily to the historical and cultural conditions of a text's production, its meanings, effects, and its later critical interpretations and evaluations (Abrams, 1999: 182-190).

Some of the main proponents of New Historicism are Stephen Greenblatt, Louis Montrose, Catherine Gallagher, D. A. Miller, Joel Fineman and Walter Benn Michaels. Although there are different versions of New Historicism, these authorities "do share common practices and assumptions, particularly concerning methodological issues and the nature of power relations (Brannigan, 2001: 173).

New Historicism is not simply a return to the previous kind of literary scholarships. It should be made clear that the principles, methods and practices of the new historicists are very different from the historical criticism which considers realistic literature as a direct mirror of the realities of a period (Abrams, 1999: 182-183).

New Historicism is characterized by some major principles. For example, the new historicists believe that reality is constructed in the human mind. For new historicists, there is no absolute, universal, and transcendental truth; truth is specific for specific time and place. Truth also changes when the power relationship changes (Brannigan, 2001: 173). Literature is also understood in light of the context. The new historical critics take into consideration not only the context of the story or the event explained in the literary work, but also the context of the production, and the context of the consumption (Abrams, 1999: 183). They are concerned with the contexts of the author, the reader and the text (P. C. Kar, 1997: 71-72 as cited by Tiwary and Chandra, 2009: 86).

New historicists assert that in understanding a literary work, historical, political, biographical, and other forms of writing play important roles. Conversely, literary texts equally give useful knowledge and insight in understanding historical or political texts (Bertens, 2001: 180; Dogan, 2005: 80). New Historicism is characterized by intertextuality. The literary text is read and understood in relation to other literary and non literary texts and other documents of the same era (Holub, 1992: 174; Zekiye, (n.d): 62).

The relationship between literature and context is multi directional. Literature can be simultaneously considered as a product of history, and in turn as a tool that has significance in the making of history. Literature represents history, but it is not a mere representation of history. It is rather actively involved in the shaping of history, and gives insights into the formation and interpretation of historical and political moments. Literature reveals the processes and tensions by which historical changes were brought about, and may motivate changes in history. It may, at the same time, reveal the social and political ideas of a particular time in history and also instigate the need for rupture or the need for change in that political system (Bertens, 2001: 166 – 167; Brannigan, 2001: 169 -170).

‘Textuality of history and historicity of texts’ is one of the leading slogans of the new historicists (Montrose, in Brannigan, 2001: 170). New historicists understand history as embedded in texts, and, at the same time, texts, in one way or another, represent history. They are interested neither in literature nor in history; they are rather interested in literature in history (Brannigan, 2001: 170). A new historicist “accepts Derrida’s view that there is nothing outside the text, the special sense that everything about the past is only available to us in textualized form: through the ideology, or outlook, or discursive practices of its own time, through those of ours, and through the distorting web of language itself” (Barry, 2002: (n.p.)). Our knowledge of the past is constructed from these practices.

For new historicists, the self is not autonomous, but it is constructed by discourse; every individual is the result of his culture, the result of the context and the episteme. That is, nothing is outside these situations (Bertens, 2001: 179). Likewise, individual authors who are engaged in the business of writing texts, consciously or unconsciously reflect what they gain from other related discourses, texts, or the

culture; hence, both the author and the text are not autonomous. In short, “the work of art is a product of the negotiation between a creator or class of creators, equipped with a complex, communally shared repertoire of conventions, and the institutions and practices of society”(Greenblatt as cited by Bertens, 2001: 140).

Power relations of a particular era shape how literature is produced, distributed and consumed (Zekye, (n.d.): 62; Brannigan, 2001: 169). Literary texts that were prohibited once, might at times be free and encouraged to be published, distributed, and read following changes in the cultural and political system. For new historicists who are influenced by Foucault, power relationship is not unidirectional in which the powerful dominates the powerless; or the upper class dominates the lower class. It is rather bi-directional where the lower class, in some way, resists the upper class, the factory workers resist the injustices of the factory owners and their respective directors (Foucault, 1972, 1979 as cited by Tyson, 2006: 284-285). New historicists believe that literary texts have functions within a network of power relations in society. As previously mentioned, “literature can serve to persuade us of the justice of particular causes; or can police the dominant ideas of a particular time by representing alternatives or deviations as threatening” (Brannigan, 2001: 172). Since literature is a discourse characterized by power relations, it can be considered as “a loyal watchdog, patrolling the fences of a conservative social order” (Brannigan, 2001: 172); it can also equally serve as an agent that brings resistance and change in the power relationships.

For new historicists, literature like any discourse, reflects ideology. It reflects and shapes individuals, groups, and even a nation (Bertens, 2001: 177; Tyson, 2006: 288). According to Bertens, “the literary text is a time- and place-bound verbal construction that is always, in one way or another political; because it is inevitably involved with a discourse or an ideology, it cannot help being a vehicle for power” (Bertens, 2001: 177).

In spite of the contribution of New Historicism to literary theory and criticism, there have been some criticisms against it. Formalists, structuralists and deconstructionists criticize New Historicism for its focus on historical contexts and political orientations. It is criticized for its rejection of both the autonomy and individual genius of the author and the autonomy of the literary work. New Historicism is also criticized for

its failures to meet form of the literary work (Brannigan, 2001). In general, new historicists are criticized for their anti-formalist, anti-universalist and anti-absolutist agendas.

The application of New Historicism as one of the tools for analyzing the novels in this study helps in creating a relationship between the novels and the social contexts of their writing. Furthermore, the tool facilitates intertextual reading in which the study of the novels could be related to historical, political and legal documents. It further helps to investigate the relationship between the politics and the literature and the influence that the literature and the politics have on each other. Above all, the tool can function in combination with the other two tools, System Theory and Critical Discourse Analysis, used in this study. Generally, New Historicism enables to address the research questions that ask how the political contexts influenced the discourses in the selected Amharic novels, how the novels influenced the contexts during the three political periods, and the trend observed with regard to the representations of politics in Amharic novels along the years.

2.1.5.2. Bourdieu's Literary System Theory

The term 'system theory' is a general term that may be employed by various fields of systematic studies. Bourdieu's system theory is one of the system theories⁹ that can be applied in the study of literature. It is basically a sociological theory that studies a network of assumed and observable relations (Boschetti, 2006: 146).

Like New Historicism, Bourdieu's System Theory could be said to have developed as a counter to Formalism and Structuralism, for their being limited to the internal readings of the text, in isolation from external factors. Bourdieu (as cited in Boschetti, 2006: 145) explains, "Since internal readings eliminate the agents from consideration and isolate texts from the social conditions of their production, circulation and consumption, they cannot explain 'what makes a given work a literary work', nor the 'value' of a work and its properties". In other words, Bourdieu wants to make the point that a literary work is valid only when it is studied in relation to the politics, culture, economy and history of that contemporary society. Bourdieu is interested in

⁹ There are other system and poly system theories promoted by theoreticians like Even-Zohar Itamar (see, for instance, *Poetics Today*, Vol. 1, No. 1/2, Special Issue: Literature, Interpretation, Communication (Autumn, 1979), pp. 287-310)

the interaction of the different fields, and in intertextuality; for him, the text cannot be fully investigated by disregarding the context, and its production. Bourdieu's theoretical approach should not be taken only as a counter approach to the formalists and structuralists; it can also be taken as an important alternative theoretical approach in the cultural and literary fields (Johnson, 1993: 1; Eastwood, 2007: 150).

Bourdieu developed key theoretical concepts (field, habitus, and capital) that are widely accepted in the field of social science (Bourdieu, 1993; Dubois, J., Emery, M. & Sing, P., 2000: 84, Calhoun, C., 1993). Taken together, the concepts have the capacity to describe society and the power relationships that exist in society at a particular time; our everyday experience can be explained in terms of these systemic studies and concepts. The relationships among individuals, groups, institutions in a given field and among different fields, as well as the struggles that take place because of economic, political, or cultural benefits can be explicated in terms of Bourdieu's sociological concepts, each of which is briefly discussed below.

A 'field', one concept in the system, is a certain economic, cultural or social discursive area that is governed by its own rules and regulations and in which its agents take part in the network to produce and reproduce capital and then build power. A field is a network structure, or a set of relationships, which may be intellectual, religious, educational and cultural (Calhoun, 2003, Navarro 2006: 18 as cited in <http://www.powercube.net/other-forms-of-power/bourdieu-and-habitus/>). According to Dubois, J., Emery, M. & Sing, P. (2000: 89), "a field may be defined as a structured site of relations as well as a dynamic competitive space, and this structuralization generates an ensemble of interdependently related positions".

There are different autonomous fields that function within their own structure. The social field, the economic field, and the cultural field are some examples of autonomous fields. Each field has different sub-fields that are constituted within each line of structure (Dubois, J., Emery, M. & Sing, P., 2000: 89-91).

'Cultural field' is one of the general fields that constitute different sub autonomous fields that are governed by their own logic and, at the same time, interact with other sub fields. According to Webb, J., Sxhirato, T. & Danaher, G. (2002: x-xi) "A cultural field can be defined as a series of institutions, rules, rituals, conventions, categories,

designations and appointments which constitutes an objective hierarchy, and produce and authorize certain discourses and activities.” The institutions, the rules and regulations are always in interactions with each other so that they produce and reproduce knowledge, capital and power.

One of the sub fields of the cultural field is the literary field. Like any other field, the literary field is an autonomous “social universe with its own laws of functioning, its specific relations of force, its dominants and its dominated, and so forth”(Johnson, 1993: 163). The literary field as one institution moves in its own field of sphere following its own logic. The various sub institutions and agents that are constituted in the literary field also interact positively or negatively within the sphere of the literary field. The various agents - the authors, the editors, the publishers, the press law officials, the writers union, and the consumers - who are constituted in the field, on one hand, act according to the specific working culture of the field and on the other, the struggle for the economic or cultural benefit. This concept of the field could help in studying the relationships between the literature, the censorship and the circulation.

Although a literary field is autonomous, it is inevitable that it will have intra relationships within the field, or interrelationships with other cultural or social science fields. It is unavoidable that the field will have influence on other related fields, and that it would, in turn, be influenced by other fields. With regard to this point, Webb, Sxhirato and Danaher (2002: 28) assert, “Fields are fluid and dynamic, mainly because they are always being changed both by internal practices and politics and by their convergence with other fields”.

In the literary field, let alone the agents “the content and the aesthetic codes (of the texts) are constructed according to the logic of possible positions in this space, and not as a direct reflection of social and historical facts” (Viala and Moriarty, 2006: 81). The market, the censor law, the law, the media, or the critics might influence the facts that are going to be represented or reconstructed.

The literary field, like all of the arts and cultural productions is “predisposed, consciously and deliberately or not, to fulfil a social function of legitimating social differences’ and thus contribute to the process of social reproductions” (Johnson, 1993: 25). The author as a member of a certain class and institution, using his

experiences and knowledge (in Bourdieu terms 'habitus') shows power relationships that exist in everyday life, and legitimizes power relationships that exist implicitly and unconsciously in the literary works; the author plays a role that his habitus and level of capital permit him.

The sociology of literary criticism and researchers like Bourdieu are interested in the interrelationships of the sub fields and institutions. As Boschetti (2006: 146) notes, they are involved in "the study of all the categories of agents who contributes to the existence and functioning of literature (publishers, patrons, journalists, critics, professors, historians, translators, readers etc.), thereby constituting a whole series of sub fields, the study of which reveals their specific characteristics". For Bourdieu, texts must be analyzed both in relation to other texts, and in relation to the structure of the field and to the specific agents involved. This point is further explained as follows (Institutions of Social Theory in America, 2009: n.p.):

Literary critics working under Bourdieu's influence are interested not so much in an analysis of the labor that goes into constituting or constructing literature's conceptual content, but in what happens to literature once it has been constructed: how it circulates, who is able to recognize and evaluate it, who profits by it, what social practices it makes possible or participates in. Rather than attempting to craft diachronic narratives of how particular, more or less philosophical concepts might have found their way into literature, Bourdieuvians tend to favor synchronic analyses of literary practice at particular stages of cultural and social development.

'Habitus' is one of Bourdieu's key concepts closely related to his other concepts of field, power and capital. Habitus is formed in the field; in turn it shapes the field. Capital also grows from habitus in the field and the field, in turn shapes the habitus. These concepts have mutually supportive relationships in understanding situations and doing research in the human sciences (Calhoun, C., Lipuma, E. and Postone M., 1993, Calhoun, 1993).

Habitus is a predisposition that is learnt unconsciously while living in the society; individuals learn it from the social and cultural experiences of the society. An individual develops his habitus starting from early childhood in the family, schools, clubs and institutions; and, the individual further develops his habitus from different

experiences in which he or she is involved. As Dubois, J., Emery, M. & Sing, P. (2000: 90) explain, “The habitus is the past within us” which further develops as the agent’s interaction continues in different fields.

Habitus is a set of long lasting dispositions or behaviours, values, norms, etiquettes that are learnt from the culture in the long processes of inculcation that last longer within the body. These dispositions, which are learnt across time, make the agent what he is. They enable him to react in the society, in the culture or in particular groups as the field demands of him. Though habitus is durable and long lasting, it is also liable to gradual changes due to several reasons such as time, place or environment. For instance, habitus might be transposed or improvised when agents are exposed to new culture and experiences. These points are elaborated by, Webb, J., Sxhirato, T. & Danaher, G. (2002: 36 - 37) who say:

Habitus can be understood as the values and dispositions gained from our cultural history that generally stay with us across contexts (they are durable and transposable). These values and dispositions allow us to respond to cultural rules and contexts in a variety of ways (because they allow for improvisations), but the responses are always largely determined - regulated - by where (and who) we have been in a culture.

The relationship between habitus and field is inevitable; one does not exist without the other. They are mutually exclusive and intelligible; one is necessary for the existence of the other. First of all, it is the existence of agents, with more or less similar interest or experience or value system or in general habitus which is the foundation for field. In other words, a field is constituted by agents who have more or less similar habitus; and agents contribute to the existence and power of the field. The field in turn shapes the habitus of individual agents (Dubois, J., Emery, M. & Sing, P., 2000: 90).

Habitus is also necessary in building capital in the field. Unless the individual agent creates and develops his habitus, and unless he accumulates knowledge that is relevant to the field, he will not have rich cultural capital that places him in a dominant position in the field. Habitus is also necessary for practice; unless the individual agent has the habitus, he can’t change his subjective experience into practice.

For Bourdieu, the concepts of field and habitus are designed to solve the problem that exists between two anomalies i.e., the objective and subjective experiences (Johnson, 1993). The habitus is a subjective experience that is created from the interaction made in the objective world, culture, and history. In other words, the habitus is a subjective experience that results from the objective experience, the culture, the world. The agent changes the habitus into practice and thought.

The concept of capital is not limited to economic capital. Bourdieu extended the concept of capital to cultural and social capitals or to symbolic capital. The cultural and social capitals are gained through the agents' interactions in the cultural and social fields, respectively. The symbolic capital is accumulated, for instance, from educational training or field of specialization. Cultural capital is gained from the position the agent holds in the cultural field. His knowledge of the culture, his involvement in the cultural activities and the position he holds in institutions, his relationships with others determine the agent's capital. The social and cultural capitals produce symbolic capital that brings prestige to the agent. Another important point regarding capital is that, it can be transformed into economic capital. Those who have high symbolic capitals benefit from their status; they get more income than those who have less capital. They gain other social advantages and as a result get moral satisfactions.

Habitus and capital together bring difference in power relationships of the society. Those who are rich in their habitus and capital are in a dominant position, while the others who have less habitus/knowledge and capital in a field are in a dominated position. These power relationships also exist between different fields. As explained above, the literary field, for instance, could be in a dominated position in terms of the economy, and may be dominant in terms of symbolic capital.

The concepts of field, habitus and capital are relevant for research in any social science field as well as in the field of literature. Bourdieu himself first applied these concepts in the field of literature. He analyzed Flaubert's novel using these concepts (Bourdieu, 1995: 1-40). The concepts enabled this researcher to investigate the synchronic relationships that existed between the agents and the institutions. The concepts also gave room to the study of the authors' background, and other contexts related to the literary works under investigation. Various fields influence one another;

thus, the concepts helped the researcher to investigate how politics and history influenced the representation of politics in the novels, and the influence of the novels upon history. Moreover, Bourdieu's sociological theory of literature enabled the researcher to look into the literary forms, whenever the need arose.

According to Bourdieu, literature as a system consists of both literary/aesthetic and sociological aspects, and the literary field involves different agents. The study of literature should focus on the horizontal relationships of these different fields and agents. Regarding this, Johnson (1993: 14) affirms, "The analysis of literary form or language is an essential part of literary study, but has full meaning only when viewed relationally – or, broadly speaking, inter-textually - and when reinserted into the objective field of social relations of which it is part and from which it derives." Johnson's explanation magnifies Bourdieu's view that literature as a system must be investigated not in isolation, from the internal or external point of view, but from the inter-textual point of view. Related systems should be investigated synchronically.

There are common elements between New Historicism and System Theory in that both give concern to the sociology of literature. The study of a literary text cannot be complete without taking into consideration the context in which the literary text is produced and read. Both share the view that literary texts should be understood in relation to other texts. In other words, inter-textuality is their common principle. They also focus on power relationships and ideology that subtly exist in the literary works.

2.1.5.3. Critical Discourse Analysis

Before discussing Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), the concept of 'discourse' shall be explained. Although the term discourse is a very broad term that can be defined in different ways, the following ideas of Foucault (1980) (as paraphrased by Wolfrey, 2008), Fairclough (1995), Mikics (2007: 90), Heracleous, 2004 and Hendry, 2000 as cited by Heracleous, 2006: 2) could be appropriate for this study.

According to Foucault (paraphrased by Wolfrey, 2001: 298), discourse is a "language practice: that is, language as it is used by various constituencies (the law, medicine, the church, for example) for purposes to do with power relationships between people." It means that discourse refers to a discussion which is focused on a specific subject. Fairclough (1995: 7) also describes discourse as "use of language seen as a

form of social practice, and discourse analysis is analysis of how texts work within socio cultural practice. Such analysis requires attention to textual form, structure and organization at all levels”. Moreover, Mikics (2007: 90) defines discourse as “the range of social practices, customs, and institutions surrounding a given subject matter, in addition to the subject matter itself”. Heracleous (2004) and Hendry (2000) as cited by Heracleous (2006: 2) explain discourse as:

Collections of texts, whether oral or written, located within social and organizational contexts that are patterned by certain structural, inter textual features and have both functional and constructive effects on their contexts. In this sense, language can be seen as the raw material of discourse, and individual texts are both manifestations, and constitutive, of broader discourses.

This quotation describes that discourses could be oral or written texts. But discourse is not limited to oral or written texts; it also includes other communicative entities or texts like pictures, photographs, designs, buildings, music, symbols, codes, body languages and gestures (Fairclough, 1995: 4). In this study the focus is on written literary texts.

Literature is one of the many types of discourses. Steen (1999: 115) states that “literature is a type of discourse that is characterized by the domain value ‘artistic’, the content value ‘fictional’, and the functional value ‘positively affective’ or simply ‘divertive’”. Bertens also explains that, “In literary studies in general, critics start from the assumption that literary texts are inevitably situated within the sort of discourses that according to Foucault carry and maintain social power” (Bertens, 2008: 190). This means that literature is a type of discourse that can reveal power relationships which exist among different social groups and institutions.

There are three approaches to discourse: the interpretative approach, the functional approach, and the critical approach. These approaches are not mutually exclusive. For Heracleous (2006: 2-3):

Interpretive approaches conceptualize discourse as communicative action that is constructive of social and organizational realities. Functional approaches view discourse as a tool at the actors’ disposal, to be employed

for facilitating managerially relevant processes and outcomes such as effective leadership, employee motivation, and organizational change. Critical approaches conceptualize discourse as power knowledge relationships, constitutive of subjects' identities and of organizational and societal structures of domination.

The Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is a more appropriate approach to this study because the primary focus of the study is on the critical study of discourses, and power relationships between institutions observed in the discourses.

CDA primarily studies how power relationships, dominance, discrimination, and inequality are produced, reproduced, and resisted in discourse (Fairclough, 1992: 1-2; Blommaert and Bulcaen, 2000: 449). It examines how power relationships are legitimized and defended in different genres of discourse like gender, ethnicity, race, class, media, parliament, politics, court and other similar discourses.

CDA is an interdisciplinary research approach that manipulates knowledge from different social science fields like linguistics, history, culture and psychology. For example, Fairclough's CDA draws its linguistic approach from Halliday's systematic linguistics, and it borrows the concepts of structures of discourse, discursive practice and power from Foucault; even the ideologies are taken from New Historicism (Althusser) and Marxism, while the concepts of inter-textuality come from Bakhtin and Kristeva. The CDA is commonly applied in most of the social science fields that manipulate oral and written discourses and texts as resources for research studies in their particular fields (Fairclough, 1995: 6, 17; Wodak and Mayer, 2001: 15).

Even though the CDA originated in the late 1980s in Europe and developed in the 1990s, these days it has become one of the most influential research approaches widely accepted in the fields of humanities and the social sciences. Among the proponents of CDA, Norman Fairclough, Ruth Wodak, Teun Van Dijk and Paul Chilton are the leading practitioners (Blommaert and Bulcaen, 2000: 447).

As Fairclough notes, CDA is projected to fill gaps that were observed using the interdisciplinary research approaches functioning in different fields and in the study of the relationships between language, social structure and power. A central area of

interest in Fairclough's CDA is the investigation of power relationship and change (Fairclough, 1992: 1)

Though CDA theories have some differences, they are also characterized by common principles. They agree on certain principles of critical methods of analysis of discourse, and address similar issues such as power relationships, domination, difference and resistance. Since CDAs belong to the same movement, they share some assumptions (Fairclough, 1992: 4 -15; Blommaert and Bulcaen, 2000: 454; Wodak and Meyer, 2001: 16 -17). Firstly, all discourses are historical, and are understood with reference to their respective contexts; secondly, discourses incorporate linguistic categories into their analysis; thirdly, they are characterized by inter-textuality and inter-discursivity; fourthly, they see their procedure as a hermeneutic process; and lastly, but not least, the results of their study are open ended, always open to new interpretations and new findings.

Furthermore, most CDAs follow more or less similar research methods. First of all CDAs are three dimensional i.e discourse as linguistic practice, discursive practice and social practice. Discourse as linguistic practice focuses on language aspects such as words, phrases, metaphors, sentences, cohesion, and styles. Discourse as discursive practice considers the process of production, distribution and consumption. In the process of production and distribution, the interferences of the concerned bodies like the cultural bureaus, the censor law, the publishers, the editors, the critics and the market are not easily estimated. Their influence can be discerned in the content, form, genre and style of the texts. So, the link between the text and these institutions and discursive practices are the focuses of the CDAs. The social practice also reveals the power relationships that exist among the institutions concerned. The power influence, the ideology reflected in the text and its impact on the potential readers/hearers and the resistance are investigated (Fairclough, 1995: 2).

Fairclough adds a threefold distinction in research methodology. CDA should make a progression from description to interpretation and explanation. In the first phase (in the phase of description), CDA focuses on the textual - linguistic - features of the text under study. In the second phase, interpretation is concerned with the way in which participants arrive at some kind of understanding of discourses based on their

cognitive, social and ideological resources. In the third phase, explanation, the researcher draws on social theory (Blommaert, 2005: 30).

CDA is particularly interested in the relationships between language and society, language and power, as well as power relationships between different institutions as reflected in the texts. It discloses both the implicit and explicit power relationships and ideologies that exist in the texts under investigation. CDA investigates opaque as well as explicit and transparent structural relationships of forms of inequalities, discriminations, and resistances of the text under investigation as manifested in language use (Fairclough, 1995: 1; Blommaert and Bulcaen, 2000: 448).

Power, ideology, and history are some of the key concepts in the field of CDA (Fairclough, 1995; Wodak and Mayer, 2001). For these authorities, power is about the relations of differences, and particularly about the effects of differences in social structures - the ruling and the ruled classes, the dominant and the dominated, the discriminators and the discriminated, the elites and the common men, the leaders and the followers, the haves and the have nots. Power is believed to be manifested in discourses or texts through language use. Regarding the relation of language and power, Wodak and Mayer (2001: 11) argue:

The constant unity of language and other social matters ensures that language is entwined in social power in a number of ways: language indexes power, expresses power, is involved where there is contention over and a challenge to power. Power does not derive from language, but language can be used to challenge power, to subvert it, to alter distributions of power in the short and long term. Language provides a finely articulated means for differences in power in social hierarchical structures. ... CDA takes an interest in the ways in which linguistic forms are used in various expressions and manipulations of power.

Ideology exists in discourse; in other words, discourse is believed to be ideological. It reflects some form of ideology of different classes, groups or institutions. According to Wodak (n.d.: 23), discourse is the place where language and ideology meet, and discourse analysis is the analysis of the ideological dimensions of language use, and of the materialization in language of ideology. Since discourse is ideological,

proponents of CDA describe that there is no arbitrariness of signs (Fairclough, 1995: 17-18, Wodak, 2002: 11)

History is the other key concept of the CDA. For CDA practitioners, every discourse is historically produced and interpreted. Therefore, to understand a text, it is inevitable to consider the historical and cultural contexts. Discourse is not only embedded in history; it also has its effect on history, in that it influences, shapes or brings a change in history (Fairclough, 1995: 11, 19).

Intertextuality and hegemony are other concepts of the CDA, like that of Bourdieu's Literacy System Theory. The proponents of CDA believe that every text is interrelated to other texts, and every discursive practice is interrelated to other discursive practices. In a given text, other previous related texts are embedded explicitly or implicitly, consciously or unconsciously for different reasons. A text might refer to another text for explanatory or illustrative purposes. This kind of overt reference is called manifest inter-textuality. Sometimes the reference might not be overtly expressed; such kind of reference is called constitutive inter-textuality (Fairclough, 1992: 101-137; Fairclough as cited by Blommaert, 2005: 29). In the constitutive intertextuality, elements of heterogeneous texts are covertly integrated in the text.

Hegemony is concerned with the power that is achieved through constructing alliances and integrating classes and groups through consent, so that "the articulation and re-articulation of orders of discourse is correspondingly one stake in hegemonic struggle" (Fairclough, 1992 as cited by Blommaert and Bulcaen, 2000: 449).

As far as its theoretical basis is concerned, CDA works eclectically with a variety of approaches in many respects; the whole range from grand theories to linguistic theories is touched, although each individual approach emphasizes different levels. With regard to data collection, CDA has no accepted canon of data collection method (Wodak and Mayer, 2001). The research result of the CDA is always open ended, as previously explained. It is always open for different logical arguments and interpretations (Wodak and Mayer, 2001: 17).

CDA can serve as a tool to study literary texts. It is possible to study power relationships and ideology of the literary discourse via its language, the discursive

practice (production, distribution and consumption) and the social structure. In other words, the three dimensional frameworks of CDA can be applied in the study of literary discourses (Fairclough, 1995: 2, 23).

CDA further allows the study of both form and content of the discourse. According to Fairclough (1995: 188), “One cannot properly analyze content without simultaneously analyzing form, because the contents are always necessarily realized in forms, and different contents entail different forms and vice versa. In brief, form is a part of content”. Form and content are two sides of the same coin. The contents are always necessarily realized in forms and vice versa. It is possible to study the power relationships through the language use - words, metaphors, and the shape of paragraphs, turn taking in dialogue, manner of expression, and other forms and texture of the literary discourse.

Among the criticisms made against CDA (Widowson as cited by Wodak and Mayer, 2001: 17), the issues of its being ideological and its interdisciplinary approach are some in addition to some others that are directly related to its principles and characteristics. In fact, the proponents of the theory believe that CDA is ideological and that its approach is multidisciplinary. These characteristics are what make CDA different from other research methods. It is also the interdisciplinary feature of the CDA which makes it one alternative method in social sciences studies.

CDA is selected as one approach in this study because it works eclectically with other approaches (Wodak, and Meyer, 2001: 30). Hence, in this study it is used with the two other approaches discussed earlier - the New Historicism and Bourdeau’s System Theory. CDA shares common elements with New Historicism and System Theory, in that all focus on the sociological aspects of literary works. They also focus on the study of power relationships. Furthermore, CDA enables the researcher to investigate the language and the forms of the texts. It helps in answering the research question that asks how the specific political events of the different periods are represented in the selected Amharic novels. In general it is with the help of these tools that the novels selected for the discussion are read, analyzed and interpreted, and the research questions are answered.

2.2. The Context of the Study

2.2.1. Introduction

This part sets out the context of the study by providing a brief discussion of the historical background of the three political periods in Ethiopia during which the Amharic novels were published. These periods are the Imperial, the Darg and the current EPRDF. In each political period, different political events and developments have taken place. These different political events have been believed to be represented in Amharic novels in general, and in the selected novels in particular, in different degrees. The major events and developments, especially those that were observed to have been represented in Amharic novels are discussed in this section. This guides the analyses of the representation of the different political events of the three political periods in chapters three, four, five and six. The discussion also includes some important events that were not represented in novels. This was done in order to pose questions why the events were not represented in the novels. According to Fairclough (1995:5), absences of representation might give different meanings when interpreted contextually. The discussion of the contexts in this chapter further helps in answering the research question which asks what the specific political events represented in Amharic novels of each political period are. It also addresses the research questions: how are the specific political events of the different periods represented in the selected Amharic novels? Which novels represent the contemporary political events of their respective political periods and which ones represent political events that happened in the previous period/s? How do the political contexts influence the political discourses of the Amharic novels, and how do the novels influence the contexts during the three political periods?

2.2.2. The Political Contexts of Haileselassie, the Darg and the EPRDF Governments

2.2.2.1. The Imperial Period of Haileselassie

The Imperial period covers 44 years, from October 1930 to February 1974. Emperor Haileselassie was crowned in October 1930 and ruled the country for forty four years. The period was not all smooth for him; some years were peaceful and some others were difficult. The major events that happened during those years included: the pre-war politics, the Italian invasion of Ethiopia and the consequent fleeing of the

Emperor, the new spirit after the return to freedom, the 1960 coup attempt, the uprisings of peasants and the student movements, the Eritrean question and the 1973 famine, and factors that led to the 1974 revolution. These events are briefly discussed below.

2.2.2.1.1. The Pre-war Politics : 1930 – 1935.

Haileselassie ruled the country as king of kings from 1930 to 1974. Before that, he was heir to the throne for almost eight years; in October 1928, he became king for two years until 1930, when he became ‘Nīgusä Nāgäsīt’ (King of Kings) (Berihun, 2000: 73; Bahru, 2002a: 128 - 137).

In the pre-war period, Haileselassie took progressive measures to modernize the country in different areas; however, the progress was affected by the Italian invasion in 1935. Among the progressive measures, the formation of centralized government, expansion of education, abolition of slavery and the writing of a constitution were notable (Marcus, 1994: 130 - 137; Bahru, 2002a: 137- 148 & 2002b).

Though he was not successful, the foundation for the formation of a central government was planned by Emperor Tewodros in the 19th century. The Emperors after Tewodros (Yohannes, Menilik, and Iyasu) with the exception of Haileselassie were not interested in forming a central government, perhaps because they knew the failed attempt by Tewodros. Unlike his predecessors, Haileselassie was successful in establishing a central government, especially after bringing Jimma, Tigray and Gojam to the centre (Bahru, 2002a: 140). The southern part of the country was already under the control of the government of Emperor Menilik. But it was in Haileselassie’s period that more regions were included and a new structural adjustment of the administrative regions was organized. The district of Chercher, which was administered by promising young intellectuals, Ras Imiru, Workneh and Teklehawariyat respectively was taken as a model for the new administrative regions (Marcus, 1994: 134 -136; Bahru, 2002a: 144 – 148 & 2002b).

The nobility did not favour the formation of the central government, because they were afraid of losing their small states (regional states). However, Haileselassie, especially after the first constitution, had the capacity to create the central state. Besides, he smoothly excluded most of the nobility and the aristocrats from the

ministerial cabinet, although they are granted “hereditary rights over tributary land (resta gult) on the basis of their services to the state” (Bahru, 2002a: 140). The emperor also chose some members of the nobility for membership of the senate (Bahru, 2002a:141). Haileselassie controlled the finance system and organized a professional army so as to make the formation of the centralized government real and strong. Different sections of the army such as the “Kibur Zäbäña” (Guard of Honour) were founded in his period.

Haileselassie got the first constitution written in 1931. It was written by Teklehawariyat Teklemariam, a young intellectual trained in Russia. He took the experiences of different European and Asian countries. The constitution avoided issues like democratic rights; it rather focussed on kingship and the unlimited power of the Emperor. However, the nobility who were excluded from the ministerial position were given the right to join the two councils of parliament. The members of the “council of legislation” with the exception of the president were the nobility, while the lower house was composed of landlords. The presidents of the two councils were from outside the nobility (Bahru, 2002a: 140 - 143).

Eventhough Menilik promulgated anti slavery, it was in the period of Haileselassie that it materialized, as the Emperor and the country were blamed for the practice by the international community (Marcus, 1994: 120; Bahru, 2002a: 94). Besides, a great deal of expansion was made by the government of Haileselassie, though the foundation of modern education was set by Emperor Menilik. Government, community, and private schools were established in the capital, Addis Ababa, and in the regions. Two boarding schools, Teferi Mekonen and Haileselassie I (Kokobe Tsebeha) were founded and supported by the Emperor. Other nobilities also contributed to the establishment of schools. Administrative regions also established schools, even at the sub-district level (Marcus, 1994: 130; Bahru, 2002a: 103 -110).

In line with the formation of the central government, Haileselassie started to strengthen the police and the army. The Holeta Police Training Center was one of them. Different sections of the army like “Kibur Zäbäña”, the Ground Force, the Police, and the Naval Force were established. The Germans, the Swedish, the Norwegians, the British and the Americans supported the different wings of the Army (Bahru, 2002a: 146-148). Generally, the pre-war period was characterized by the

establishment of schools, the formation of centralized government, the drafting of the first constitution and the establishment of modern army.

2.2.2.1.2. The Italian Invasion and the Fight for Freedom

Italy, forty years after its defeat by Ethiopians under the leadership of Emperor Menilik at the battle of Adwa, (on March, 1896), re-invaded the country in October 1935 during Emperor Haileselassie's rule. Taking a lesson from its defeat, Italy had made preparation in military equipment, war planes, chemicals and manpower armed with modern heavy machine guns. More than 300, 000 Italians and colony soldiers armed with modern guns, artilleries and supported by more than two hundred warplanes attacked Ethiopia from different directions (Paulos, 1987: 34 - 35; Marcus, 1994: 142). Bahru (2002a: 159) also explains that there were disparities in man power, armaments and airplanes. Ethiopia had a fleet of 11 airplanes of which only eight were serviceable, and they were used mainly for transport, while the Italians used over 400 aircrafts. The Italians also enjoyed numerical superiority in many of the war engagements, particularly in the Ogaden. This was a result of their askaris from Libya, Eritrea and Italian Somaliland. The Italians even used chemicals to attack the Ethiopian patriots and the army who were trying to defend their country.

The Ethiopian soldiers and patriots under the leadership of Emperor Haileselasie fought against the Italians in January 1936, four months after Italy controlled some strategic places like Adwa, Adigrat and Mekele in the northern part of the country. However, after some unsuccessful attacks against the Italians, the Ethiopian soldiers were forced to retreat from different war fronts. The Italians were backed by some traitors and landlords who betrayed the Emperor and the country for different reasons. As a result, the Emperor retreated to the capital city, Addis Ababa. A few days later, the Italians approached the capital city and the Emperor together with some of his family members and close officials left the country and went to Jerusalem and Britain (Marcus, 1994: 146; 2003: 19; Berihun, 2000: 229 - 238; Bahru, 2002a: 160; Gebrewold, 2008: 105 - 107).

After five years of bitter struggle by the Ethiopian patriots and the military support provided by Britain to Ethiopia, the Italians began to lose the battles in different war fronts until they eventually surrendered and were defeated. One of the reasons for the British to take side with the Ethiopians was that Italy was the political ally of Hitler

during the Second World War. Emperor Haileselassie then re-ascended to the throne after five years in exile.

Haileselassie's exile for five years ignited a debate in Ethiopian politics. Berihun (2000: 215) and Gebrewold (2008: 105) believe that the exile took place with the consent of the parliament and was designed to make diplomatic efforts to get support from the League of Nations and some European countries, while others (Andargachew, 1993: 6; Bahru, 2002a: 160) state that the Emperor's exile was self-imposed and an escape from potential threats from the colonizer. Berihun (2000: 229) argues that the Darg government used the issue of exile negatively for its political and propaganda purposes. Some patriots like Belay Zeleke, Takele Wolde-Hawariyat and Negash Bezabih had objections against Haileselassie's exile and his re-ascending to the throne (Bahru, 2002a: 209 - 211). These issues of war and exile are represented in some novels such as *Ariäya* (1949), by Girmachew, *Agazi* (1956), by Woldegiorgis, and *Baša Qit'aw* (1983) by Sahileselassie. The analyses of the representation of the politics in these novels are made in chapter three.

2.2.2.1.3. The New Spirit after the Return to Freedom

Other important historical developments of the period sprang from the new spirit established in the society following the return of the country to freedom and the introduction of capitalism. After the country achieved its freedom, the Emperor asked the people to work in one spirit for the development of the country. He promised equality and freedom of the people governed by the law of the country. He further called for the people to work together with the government for the development of the country in agriculture, education, art and modern administration (Berihun, 2000: 255). Accordingly, some progresses in the economic and political fields were witnessed as a result of beginning foreign relations with Britain, Norway, Sweden, and especially with USA. Those countries were involved in helping the country in its efforts to modernize the police, the air force and the naval armies, and to expand land transport, telecommunication and bank services (Bahru, 2002a: 178-188). Following the pre-war French education system, modern education system was introduced first by the British and later by the Americans, especially in big cities of the country (Bahru, 2002a: 106-107, 189). Besides, through a program called 'Point four', agreements were reached with America in the fields of agriculture, public health, education, locus

control and public administration training and the awarding of scholarships (Bahru, 2002a: 184). Foreign investments were also attracted to the country; trade with European and American markets expanded through the railway routes of Dire-Dawa and Djibouti, and via the ports of Asab and Massawa. Local trade expanded due to the improvement of land transportation systems, and this led to the foundation and growth of a number of cities along the main roads in different parts of the country. The Indo-Ethiopian Textile Mills of Aqaqi, and the Bahir Dar Textile Factory, Meta Abo Brewery, Soft drinks factory, gold mining, and a sugar factory monopolized by a Dutch firm were established. Ethiopians took the management from foreigners in many government sectors. With regard to port, “The perennial quest for a sea coast was finally realized with the federation and then the union of Eritrea with Ethiopia” (Bahru, 2002a: 178). In 1955, Haileselassie promulgated a new constitution, revising the first constitution issued in 1931. The constitution “represented a departure from the past” with the “introduction of universal adult suffrage, and the provisions of an elected Chamber of Deputies (Marcus, 1994: 165 - 166; Bahru, 2002a: 206 - 207). The roles of the nobility in government structure were minimized and ministers started to be appointed from the non-nobility. The political problems of the province of Ogaden (part of the Ethiopian Somali Land) were also solved in 1954 (Berihun, 2000: 453; Bahru, 2002a).

There were also new developments that took place with respect to literature. The most important was the establishment of Haileselassie I Prize Trust which gave international awards to outstanding persons, authors, leaders, students, organizations. Authors like Kebede Michael, Haddis Alemayehu, Tsegaye Gebre Medhin, Gebre Kirstos Desta, Mengestu Lemma, and African leader and poet, Leopold Sedar Senghor, are among those who won the prizes. The organization gave prizes to 32 national and 21 international figures from July 1963-1974 (Berihun, 2000: 529 - 582). Some of these issues of developments are represented in the novels, *Ariaya* (1949), *Agazi* (1956), *Aliwäladim* (1963) and *Filimiya* (2009). The analyses of the representation of the politics in these novels are presented in chapter four.

2.2.2.1.4. The 1960 Coup, the Uprising of Peasants and Student Movements

The hope and the good spirit which prevailed after the restoration of freedom did not last long for the monarchy was unable to progress in line with the interest and

expectations of the people. The absolute power of the monarchy in the country was not liked; the feudal lords controlled much of the farm and the grazing areas by displacing the peasants from their land, or by buying the land with small prices (Bahru, 2002a: 191).

The government also distributed land to some patriots, civil servants, and the army loyal to Haileselassie. This situation totally changed the land system in southern Ethiopia and affected the way of life of the peasants. Peasants whose land had been seized by the new landlords became serfs; in some places, due to the expansion of modern agriculture natives were forced to migrate to nearby cities (Bahru, 2002a: 191-196).

Moreover, peasants and factory workers were forced to pay high taxes for their small revenue. The mass of the rural and urban people lived in poverty, while few landlords and factory owners led luxurious lives. These situations instigated protests among peasants, students, and factory workers, and resulted in different peasant uprisings such as the Bale uprising which lasted from 1963 to 1970, the Gojam peasant uprisings which broke out in 1968 (Bahru, 2002a: 212-218), and resistances and coup attempts at different times. For example, Belay Zeleke expressed his displeasure, first by flouting orders coming from both the governor-general and the central government, and in February 1943, he fought the combined force sent from Gojjam and Addis Ababa for three months (Berihun, 2000: 693 - 696; Bahru, 2002a: 210). Negash Bezabih led a conspiracy to assassinate Haileselassie and proclaimed a republic in 1951 (Berihun, 2000: 707-709; Bahru, 2002a: 210). Takele Woldhawariyat dedicated his life to dethrone Haileselassie (Berihun, 2000: 711-724; Bahru, 2002a: 211) since his return to the throne with British support.

Although different conspiracies of coup were plotted and attempted at different times by different people, the 1960 coup attempt led by the two brothers, General Mengestu, and Germame Neway (a general of the Guard of Honour and a civil servant, educated in America, respectively), in collaboration with other military officers and civilians was better organized and nearly achieved its objective, in which almost “the Emperor came to losing his throne” (Bahru, 2002a: 211). The reason that led the brothers to organize the coup was the overall worsening of the situation in the country which affected the economy and resulted in low living standard of the people; the living

standard became even below those newly liberated African countries' at the time (Clapham, 1968: 496; Bahru, 2002a: 211-214). The coup ended in failure. While the police force and the Imperial special force, called *Kibur Zäbäña* (guard of honor), were involved in the coup, some sections of the army, the Air and the Ground forces were not included, in the conspiracy. The Air and the Ground Forces acted against the coup makers and aborted it.

Although the coup failed, it gave a lesson to the people who considered Haileselassie as God, that the majestic power could be challenged (Clapham, 1968: 507; Bahru, 2002a: 211-214). Haileselassie did not make an effort to improve the situations even after the coup attempt. Consequently, the situation became worse year after year, and increased the opposition against the regime.

University and high school students demonstrated against the government; in the year 1965, the student demonstrators carried slogans like "land to the tiller!" (Bahru, 2002a: 223; Balsvik, 2005: 150). In the 1970s, they opposed the new educational reform program known as the 'the Education Sector Review' introduced by the government. The teachers, supported by many secondary school students and some parents, perceived the sector review as detrimental to the interests of the poor and they protested against its imminent implementation (Bahru, 2002a: 225, 231). The students even raised the issue of the rights of nations and nationalities (Bahru, 2002a: 225) in 1969 and 1970. The government, in response to the uprisings of the students, took harsh measures. It jailed the student leaders and dismissed the main actors from the university. Not only that, "Beginning with the detention of student leaders in police stations in Addis Ababa, the regime had escalated its repression to mass deportations to the torrid Gibe river valley by 1972. Students meanwhile had elevated their opposition from rallies and demonstrations to the armed hijacking of a DC-3 passenger aircraft" (Bahru, 2002a: 226). These measures complicated the problems further and worsened the situation. The students went to the extent of hijacking civilian airplanes in order to make their voices heard internationally, and force the government to answer their questions. These issues of land ownership, serfdom, and students' uprisals are the concerns of some Amharic novels like *Aliwäladim* (1963), *Adäfiris* (1970) and *Filmiya* (2009). The politics and the novels are discussed in chapter four.

2.2.2.1.5. The 1973 Famine and the 1974 Revolution

In this period, Ethiopians were not only suffering from maladministration, corruption, and ethnic problems. They also suffered from famine. Historically, famine occurred in Wollo province and its surroundings in 1958 and in 1973. The 1973 drought spread over eight provinces of Wollo and killed tens of thousands of people (and animals) (Kumar, 1987: 9 - 22; Marcus, 1994: 180-181; Berihun, 2000: 1261-1269; Alemayehu, <http://www.worldhunger.org/articles/09/editorials/mariam.htm>).

The Haileselassie government tried to hide this drought from Ethiopians and the international community, but it was disclosed to the world by the British journalist, Jonathan Dimbilbi. This revelation aggravated the criticism made against the Emperor and became a major factor in increasing the volume of the objection and the uprisings of the people of Ethiopia, especially the secondary and university students. The paradox was that while the people were starving, the 80th birthday celebrations of Emperor Haileselassie were taking place in July 1972, a year before the famine, in a luxurious ceremony. This drought, thus, became one of the factors that led to the 1974 revolution.

February 1974 marks the uprising of the Ethiopian revolution. The revolution was the result of the aforementioned struggles of the people, and the effect of the excessive concentration of power in one man for more than forty years and his greed for power that blinded him from passing power to his heirs or to the people, even at the age of eighty (Berihun, 2000). The growing grievance of the students, the army, and the civil servants were also the factors that contributed to the spontaneous revolution. No one expected that a revolution would take place. That is why people describe the phenomenon of the revolution in Amharic as “abiyot fänäda”, literally translated as “the revolution erupted” and why the revolution is said to be spontaneous.

The main promoters of the revolution were students, teachers, civil servants, taxi drivers and the army. The movement started with demands for salary increment of workers, improvement of rations, drinking water and allowances for the army who were stationed in border areas, and because of inflations in the prices of food and other items. There were further questions and demands including the right to call for demonstrations, improvement of the laws and regulations related to workers, freedom to establish political parties and conduct democratic elections, introduction of land

reforms, and the release for political prisoners. These questions became problematic to the government of Haileselassie. As a result, the cabinet of Prime Minister Aklilu Habtewold was forced to resign (Bahru, 2002a: 231). The drought, the reaction of the students, the irresponsible behaviour of the Haileselassie government, and the eruption of the revolution have been reflected in the selected novel entitled *Maibäl Yabiyot Wazema* (1979) by Birhanu and discussed in chapter four.

2.2.2.2. The Darg Period

The Darg period covers 17 years, from February 1974 to 1991. Colonel Mengestu Hailemariam, under the guise of several titles, ruled Ethiopia until he fled to Zimbabwe in May 1991. There was a cabinet change when the revolution erupted; however, the new cabinet could not meet the will of the people as some of its members were drawn from the old cabinets and the ruling class. Hence the military committee known as the ‘Darg’ came to the stage.

2.2.2.2.1. Darg, Opposing Parties and the Red Terror

Following the disintegration of the Aklilu Cabinet by the emperor, another short-lived cabinet was established and different committees were formed to lead the country. But it was the last committee known as the “Darg” (formed from different army sections) that detained and assassinated the Emperor, sixty ministers, and other government officials (Berihun, 2000:1302). Mengesetu executed even some members of the Darg whom he suspected as reactionaries.

The Darg issued a program called “Itiop’ya Tiqdām” (Ethiopia First), and took some measures to implement the program. It “christened the National Development through Cooperation Campaign... it envisaged the sending of high school and university students and their teachers to the countryside in order to implement various programs of rural development under the philosophy of Ityopya Teqdem” (Marcus, 1994: 192; Bahru, 2002a: 239-240). This philosophy of “Ityopya Teqdem”, however, was not given enough support; so, the Darg changed this philosophy into another one called “Ethiopian Socialism” in response to the demands of the leftist students and elites (Bahru, 2002a: 236-238). This was followed by the nationalization of land, big private enterprises and extra city houses. The land reform was considered as progressive by many, because it enabled, at least the peasants to be free from the domination of the

land owners. Each peasant household was even given 10 hectares of land (Marcus, 1994: 192).

Although the Darg took such progressive measures, it still did not meet the demands of some elite groups. The elites demanded radical change, scientific socialism, and people's governance; and the Darg was not in a position to bring that change. Because of this, political and armed struggles erupted in different parts of the country.

Different opponent groups and fronts had different interests. Some were trying to reform the former Imperial rule (like the Ethiopian Democratic Union (EDU); and others wanted to establish provisional people's government, (like Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Party (EPRP)). But the Darg, in collaboration with some loyal political groups (like the All Ethiopia Socialist Movement (AESM/Ma'ison, in its Amharic acronym), was successful in breaking the chain and structures of the major opposition political parties. Following an attempt to assassinate Mengestu and the killing of Feqre Mar'ed, an official of the Darg regime and member of the group which was Darg's ally, by the Ethiopian People Revolutionary Party, (EPRP) (the Darg called this and other similar actions white terror), the Darg declared "Red Terror" in 1976 and massacred thousands of young Ethiopians. Bahru described (2002a: 247) this action as follows:

Vowing to avenge the life of one revolutionary with the lives of a thousand anarchists, as members of the EPRP had now been designated, the Darg hit back by executing already detained members of EPRP and rounding up suspected EPRP members and sympathizers. With the help of a series of search and destroy campaigns, the government was able to sniff out and eliminate or incarcerate EPRP militants who had gone underground as well as to disarm the civilian population. These exercises formed a dress rehearsal for the full-blown Red Terror, in which thousands of the regime's opponents were brutally murdered on the streets.

The AESM, which itself was a left wing party, but was very close to the Darg government with the aim of sharing the power of the Darg, through time played a significant role in eliminating its opponent left wing, the EPRP. The AESM even claimed for establishing the provisional people's party being confident of the support it had from some labor unions and the youth; in fact, it was finally betrayed by the

Darg, and many of its members were killed and detained (Bahru, 2002a: 247). The red terror has been an issue of the selected novels entitled *Maibäl Yabiyot Mäbača* (1981), and *Maibäl Yabiyot Magist* (1983) by Berhanu, *Yäqäy kokob T'irri* (1980) by Bealu, and *Anguz* (1992) by Tsehay. The political representation is discussed in chapter five.

2.2.2.2.2. The Ethio-Somali War

The Darg did not only maintain its power, but was also successful in defending the country against the Somali invasion. At the beginning, the Somali government was not involved in the war directly; it was through Western Somalia Liberation Front (WSLF) that it planned to invade the Ethiopian-Somali region. But in July 1977, the Siad Barre government of Somalia was directly involved in the war and invaded Ethiopia, advancing deep into Harerge province, until the situation was reversed and the Somali invaders began to lose the battle at different war fronts and finally fell into disarray and withdrew (Andargachew, 1993: 214-222; Bahru, 2002: 254;). The Darg did not only win the battle against Somalia but also gained advantage over its internal enemy, EPRP; it used the victory over the Somali forces as a propaganda against EPRP for the latter had in some way supported the WSLF (Bahru, 2002a: 254). The Darg was supported by the Soviet Union and Cuba. The issue of the Ethiopia-Somali is the subject of the novel called *T'amra T'or* (1983) by Gebeyehu, and is discussed in chapter five.

2.2.2.2.3. Socialism and the Formation of the Workers' Party

As discussed in the section above, socialism was not the guiding principle of the Darg at the beginning of the revolution. It was beyond the capacity of the Darg committee members to entertain the idea and philosophy of socialism or Marxism at that juncture. Because of this, it came up with the idea of "Ityop'ya Tiqdäm" (Ethiopia First), a slogan that was most probably introduced by Mengestu (Bahru, 2002a: 244). But the Darg was unable to lead further the revolution with the principle, "Ityop'ya Tiqdäm". Therefore, another motto called "Ethiopian socialism" was introduced. This motto still did not get the support of many leftists and intellectual groups. The leftists demanded the formation of the provisional people's government, and the introduction of scientific socialism. In response to the demand of these people, the Darg in collaboration with some parties like AESM declared "National Democratic

Revolution” in April 1976, a system that followed the experience of the Democratic Republic of China (Bahru, 2002a: 246). At this stage, the Darg not only started to compete with the left wing parties like EPRP, but also started to consider itself as the sole leader of the working class and the broad masses of Ethiopia.

Through time, Mengestu founded a party named “Abiyotawi Sadad” (literally meaning the revolutionary wild fire) and slowly attempted to eliminate rival parties like EPRP and his former allies like AESM, and the Ethiopian Oppressed People’s Revolutionary Struggle (EOPRS). Then, the Commission for the Organization of the Ethiopian Workers Party (COPWE) was organized, and this led to the formation of “Workers’ Party of Ethiopia” (WPE) in 1984 (Andargachew, 1993; Bahru, 2002a: 255-256). The slogan “Forward with the Revolutionary Leadership of Mengestu Hailemariam!” became popular at the time. A new constitution was set, and following this, “The people’s Democratic Republic of Ethiopia” was declared in 1987 and a pseudo national election in which the members and supporters of the WPE won was conducted. No rival parties had participated in the election (Bahru, 2002a: 256). Mengestu overall ruled the country for seventeen years assuming different positions and titles in the name of socialism.

Although Mengestu claimed that the revolution had transformed itself from a defensive to an attacking position following ‘the victory’ over his internal and external threats to his power, the country’s economy declined. As a result, people lacked trust in his government. His army, which was at war in the provinces of Tigrai and Eritrea, against the Tigrean people’s Liberation Front (TPLF) and Eritrean People’s Liberation Front (EPLF) respectively, lost in a number of battles. Both fronts were fighting to free Tigrai and Eritrea respectively.

2.2.2.2.4. The Red Star Multifaceted Revolutionary Campaign

The question of “Free Eritrea” emerged following the unification of Eritrea with Ethiopia during Haileselassie’s period (Bahru, 2002a: 219). But it was during the Darg period that the situation worsened and the fronts fought aggressively for freedom. The Darg had launched huge campaigns against the Eritrean People’s Liberation Front: the first campaign called “Raza Zämäčha” was conducted in 1976 and failed to succeed. The second campaign was conducted in 1978, and the third one, “the Red Star Multifaceted Campaign” was held in 1981. The preparations made in

the third campaign were so huge both militarily and propaganda wise. Most of the officials of the Darg were moved from Addis Ababa to Asmara to be engaged in different activities of the campaign. In this campaign, the Darg was at first able to attack the natural base of the EPLF called Nakfa. But, on the eve of victory the Darg army retreated for unknown reasons. As a result, the army started to morally deteriorate. Victory turned its face to EPLF which controlled strategic places, cities and main roads, and later the whole province of Eritrea in 1991 (Bahru, 2002a: 264-268). The Red Star Multifaceted campaign is the subject of the novel entitled *Oromay* (1984) and the issue is discussed in chapter five.

2.2.2.2.5. The Armed Struggle of the EPRDF and its Advance to Addis Ababa

Parallel to the events that were taking place in Eritrea, the TPLF defeated the government forces in different places in Tigray and later liberated the whole province. Although the objective of TPLF was to liberate the province of Tigray, it was encouraged by the victory it got over the Darg army, especially in an operation called “Zämäča Qit’aw” and extended its military campaign further south. An organization which had had its genesis in a desire to liberate a province had thus to think of an agenda that encompassed the whole country. To fulfil the agenda, the TPLF founded the EPRDF from the remnant members of the guerrilla fighters of EPRP, Ethiopian People Democratic Movement (EPDM) and the Oromo People Democratic Organization (OPDO) from the Afan Oromo (the language of the Oromo people) speaking war prisoners held by TPLF, advanced to the capital city and attained victory in 1991 (Bahru, 2002a: 264-266; Paulos, 2003: 14-15). This issue of armed struggle is one of the subjects of the novel called *Yäburqa Zimäta* (2000) and is discussed in chapter six.

2.2.2.2.6. The Change in the World Politics and the Appeal of Mengestu to Israel for Weapons

Towards the last years of Mengestu’s leadership, world politics had changed because of “*Perestroika*” and “*Glasnost*”. The USSR and East Germany could not continue their alliance with Mengestu as in the previous years. They could no more fulfil his needs for guns and tanks and war planes. Therefore, he was forced to turn his face to Israel for arms purchases, and requested help in military expertise. In turn, Israel

demanding Mengestu to facilitate “Operation Solomon”, an operation designed to take the ‘Ethiopian Jews’, known as the “Beta Israel”¹⁰ to Israel. Prior to this operation that took place in 1984, Israel had conducted “Operations Moses”, and “Operation Sheba”, to take ‘the Beta Israel’ people to Israel, taking an advantage of the power vacuum that had been created because of the war between the Darg and the EPLF in northern Ethiopian provinces. During Operation Solomon, Israel was able to airlift more than 14,000 Beta Israelis in less than a day and a half. For this operation, Mengestu demanded “generous financial assistance”. Israel promised to give US 30.000.000 Dollars to the Darg government, and Mengestu was on high demand for the money to purchase guns (Spector, 2005: 117, 128). According to Spector, EPRDF had agreed not to advance to the capital while the airlift was in action. This means that the EPRDF was also aware of the “rescue operations” (2005: 119). This rescue operation is one of the subjects of the novels called *Dertogada* (2009) and *Ramatohara* (2010). The politics is discussed in chapter six.

2.2.2.2.7. The Fall of the Darg and the Victory of the EPRDF

There were many factors that contributed to the fall of the Darg government. The defeat that the army suffered at different war fronts was one of the main factors. The Darg had built a well-armed huge military force. But this huge force could not be victorious for different reasons. The members were dissatisfied with the long war. They also lost confidence on the leadership of inexperienced officers who replaced experienced military chiefs like General Tariku Ayne, General Demse Bulto and others who have been victimized and assassinated by the Mengestu government

¹⁰ The Beta Israelis are sometimes called the Felashas. Their descendance is related to Queen of Sheba and King Solomon. They entered the country with Menilik I the son of Sheba and King Solomon. According to Spector (2005), Sheba, hearing of Solomon’s wisdom, visits Solomon in Jerusalem and marvels at his sagacity and splendor; she accepts the God of Israel. Solomon, then, ingeniously tricks her into having sex with him. After her return to Aksum, she gives birth to a boy called Menilik, Solomon’s first-born son. Later, Menilik visits his father. When the young man is ready to depart, the king commands the eldest sons of his counselors and officers to accompany Menilik back to Ethiopia, to establish a second Israelite kingdom there. Therefore, the Menilik’s story is one of the foundational accounts of the Beta Israel. Spector further explained, there are other version stories which recount their origins from Israel. Spector further explained that researchers argue that the Beta Israelis are not the descendants of the Israelis, but are instead indigenous Ethiopian people of Agaw stock who adopted Judaism (Spector, 2005: 3).

(Bahru, 2002a: 264-266). The army were also betrayed by their junior officers who had become corrupt. These situations created moral failure, lack of trust and confidence in the Darg army.

The second factor for the failure of the Darg and the success of the EPRDF was the strategic coalition of TPLF with other forces, namely, the EPDM and OPDO. Once the coalition party, EPRDF, was formed the road to the capital city was not difficult; it controlled different strategic places and provinces like Gondar, Wollo and some parts of Oromia in three major operations called “Operation Tewodros”, “Operation Walelegne” (named after historical heroes who belonged to Gondar and Wollo respectively) and “Bilisuma Wolkituma” (Freedom and Equality) in 1990 and 1991 (Bahru, 2002a: 264-267; Paulos, 2003: 15).

The third reason was the economic crisis that the country faced. It was not difficult to guess that the biggest proportion of the fiscal budget went to defence. Moreover, there could only be low productivity in every sector since there was no peace and stability throughout the country. Let alone the Western nations, the socialist countries were not ready to donate economic and military aid to the Darg.

The fourth factor was the rigidity of the Darg government not to revise its political system, even after the great socialist powers began to disintegrate. On the contrary, the forces that fought against the Darg revised their political philosophies and became beneficiaries of the Western countries. It was in 1990, one year before its defeat that the Darg revised its economic program moving away from a socialist economy to a mixed economy, and it was too late. Lastly, Mengestu fled to Zimbabwe, and some other officials went to other countries, and this brought an end to the Darg government, and a complete success to EPRDF. Some of these politics are issues of the novel called *Yäburiqa Zimīta* (2000). Analyses and interpretations of most of these political events of the Darg government are made in chapter five, while the rescue operation and the armed struggle are discussed in chapter six.

2.2.2.3. The EPRDF Period

The EPRDF period began in May 1991. As previously mentioned, the EPRDF is a coalition front formed by the TPLF, EPDM, OPDO and SEPDF. Different major

political events such as ethnicity, election, the Eritrean referendum, and the Ethio-Eritrea war took place in the last two decades.

2.2.2.3.1. EPRDF and the Politics of Ethnicity

EPRDF controlled Addis Ababa in May 1991. There was no exaggerated bloodshed in the city. At first, a provisional government was formed, and it was followed by a transitional government; and ultimately, the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia was established (Federal Negarit Gazeta, 1995, 1st year, no. 1, article 1). According to the constitution, the country is divided into nine “Kilils” (regions) based on settlement patterns, language, identity and consent of the people concerned (Federal Negarit Gazeta, 1995, 1st year no.1, article 46 & 47; Paulos, 2003: 17; Merara, 2003). Every ethnic group has the right to use its language in primary schools, and in courts cases (Federal Negarit Gazeta, 1995, 1st year no.1, article 39 (2)). Members of the House of Peoples’ Representatives are elected by the People for a term of five years on the basis of universal suffrage and by direct, free and fair elections held by secret ballot (Federal Negarit Gazeta, 1995, 1st year no.1, article 54). But opposing parties have been criticizing the elections as anti democratic (Joireman, 1997; Ishiyama, 2007: 5).

The centralized government system of the Darg was replaced by a federal system of governance organized based on ethnic grounds. Ethnicity is the fundamental philosophy of the government of EPRDF, right from the beginning of the provisional period (Young, 1996: 531). The constitution recognizes the unconditional right of every nationality to self determination up to secession. Regions and ethnicities have the right to administer themselves largely by their own people, or ethnics (Federal Negarit Gazeta, 1995, 1st year no.1, Article 39 (1) & (3)).

Most of the older political parties such as the TPLF, ANDM, OPDM, and SEPDM, and the newly founded organizations, such as the Donga People’s Democratic Organization (DPDO), and Argoba People’s Democratic Movement (APDM) are organized on ethnic basis. Some ethnic parties are supporters of the EPRDF. These ethnic political parties are considered by some national parties and fronts as puppet parties which do not have their own stand and program, and are being instruments of the TPLF and EPRDF. The TPLF is also criticized as having a chauvinistic attitude of Tigray nationalism (Paulos, 2003: 13, 55).

Some opposition parties accused the EPRDF government claiming that its policy of ethnic politics was the cause for the clashes that occurred between different ethnic groups in the former Harrarge, Bale and Arsi provinces during the early years of the government. For instance, in a magazine entitled, *Ethiopian Review* (July, 1992), the late professor, Asrat Woldeyes, former president of All Amhara People's Organization (AAPO), reported the massacre of the Amhars in Arba Gugu. Africa Watch also reported (*Ethiopian Review*, July 1992: 32) that political organizations have been responsible for arbitrary killings, often taking place on an ethnic or religious basis.

Infact, an idea that EPRDF promotes, and which is even stated in the constitution is that there is a need to respect the rights of the nations and nationalities of Ethiopia to build one political community which is founded on the rule of law (Federal Negarit Gazeta, 1995, 1st year, no.1, preamble). To build that political community, the EPRDF advocates that every ethnic society should have democratic relationships with other ethnic societies, nations and nationalities. Every ethnic group should strive to work for good mutual relationships and benefits. The ethnic politics and the clash between the Oromo and Amhara people in Arsi province are represented in the novel called *Yäburīqa Zīmīta* (2000).

2.2.2.3.2. The Eritrean Referendum and the Ethio-Eritrea Border Clash

The Eritrean referendum on secession took place in 1993, after two years of interim period of preparations. EPLF controlled the whole province of Eritrea and formed a provisional government in May 1991, at a time when EPRDF controlled most of the Ethiopian provinces including the capital, Addis Ababa. Eritrea became an independent state after the referendum. The EPRDF government, which was a major ally to the Eritrean People's Liberation Front, endorsed the right of the Eritrean people to self determination and voiced its support to the referendum. It was reported that 99.805 % of the voters had chosen freedom (Iyob, 2000: 670). As a result of the referendum carried out from 23 - 25 April, Eritrea seceded from Ethiopia and became an independent state. Some Ethiopians criticize the EPRDF government for the referendum and the recognition of the secession of Eritrea.

The alliance between the EPRDF and EPLF did not last long. The alliance broke and led to a border clash in 1998. Overtly, the border dispute between the two nations

seems to be the cause for the battle; however, economic and ideological factors might also have aggravated their differences and led the two countries to gun battle. Eritrea was using Ethiopian currency for some years even after the referendum; open trade and open frontiers existed prior to the war (Iyob, 2000: 676). The battle lasted from May 1998 to 2000 until Eritrea was defeated in Badme and other war fronts. The United Nation was involved in the peace process and United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE) was deployed at the border. Each country deported thousands of people to the other. The war was considered by some as a war between the same people, the Tigreans (Lencho, 2003: 370), who speak the same language but live in two different states.

2.2.2.3.3. The 2005 Election and Opponent Political Parties

Since EPRDF came to power in 1991, there have been four national elections (in 1995, 2000, 2005 and 2010). Several people believe that the 2005 election was the most important, because in contrast to the previous three elections, that one was “sharply contested and offered Ethiopian citizens a democratic choice for the first time in their long history” (The Carter Center, 2005). According to the National Election Board of Ethiopia (as cited by, Ishiyama (2007: 5) the EPRDF won 327 seats, while the opposition parties won 147 seats. However, the opposition parties did not accept the results reported by the board; a lot of complaints were reported to the election board and the international community. The opposition parties’ leaders accused the EPRDF of fraud and rigging ballot cards; because of this, huge demonstrations took place in different cities and clashes with government forces resulted in many deaths, injuries, and detentions (The Carter Center, 2005; Ishiyama, 2007: 5). Lastly, the major opposition parties decided not to join the parliament.

Most of the political organizations involved in the politics were ethnic political parties. Since the EPRDF is by itself an ethnic group organization, it seems to encourage ethnic political parties. From the beginning, national political parties like the EPRP and AESM which were once active in the Darg period were not allowed to participate in the formation of the transitional government in 1991. The ethnic organizations like the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF), Oromo National Liberation Front (ONLF), and The Islamic Front for the Liberation of Oromia

(IFLO) were allowed to participate. Wondwoson (2009: 62) explains that after the coming to power of the EPRDF in 1991 a number of ethnic based political parties mushroomed in Ethiopia. The EPRDF, as an ethnic-based party coalition, encouraged the formation of political parties based on ethnic lines and tacitly discouraged non-ethnic parties or other pan Ethiopian parties. Even in the 2005 election, it was the ethnic parties that were favoured than the national political parties.

There are different opposition groups in the country at the moment. Wondwoson (2009: 65-66) explains the categorization of the current Ethiopian opposition groups. The first category is composed of individuals and organizations of ex-members of the government of Haileselassie organized in the Ethiopian Democratic Union (EDU). The second is the ex-leftist groups such as the former members of the Darg government, namely ex-members of Workers Party of Ethiopia. The third category is made up of former left wing, non ethnic parties like Ethiopian people Revolutionary Party (EPRP), All Ethiopian Socialist Movement (AESM), Marxist Leninist Revolutionary Organization and Ethiopian Oppressed People's Revolutionary Struggle. The fourth group includes the rebel fronts that are conducting armed struggle against the EPRDF led government - the ethnic organizations, the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF), Oromo National Liberation Front (ONLF), Islamic Front for Liberation of Oromia (IFLO) and the non-ethnic rebel group like the Ethiopian People Patriot Front (EPPF). The fifth group includes the loyal ethnic and non ethnic oppositions which are legally registered and have been participating in elections. The sixth group is composed of the so-called "phony oppositions" which the government uses to discredit and embarrass the entire opposition camp. The seventh group includes ex-members of the ruling TPLF-EPRDF who either resigned or were expelled from the ruling party due to various reasons (like Arena Tigray for Democracy and Sovereignty, Tigrean Alliance for National Democracy (TAND) and the Tigray People's Democratic Movement (TPDM)).

The opposition pan-Ethiopian political rebel parties like the Ethiopian National United Front (ENUF) and Ethiopian People's Patriotic Front (EPPF) have declared armed struggle. The EPPF was organized after the 2005 election by such persons like

Dr. Berhanu Nega, who was once the key person for “Qenejet” (the major coalition party participated in the 2005 election). The Ethiopian National Unity Front that was founded in 2002 began to openly announce its anti EPRDF stand, especially after the 2005 election. The rebel front was organized to eliminate “the tribalism regime” of TPLF/EPRDF (the political Program of ENUF). One of the people who organized the front was the late Ethiopian NASA scientist and engineer, Kitaw Ejigu (Lucy, vol. 2, no. 1, 2003 (Dinqnāš, Yākatit 1995)); Political Program of the Ethiopian National United Front; Los Angeles Times, January 17, 2006). However, after sometime the engineer was reported to have died because of a stroke (The Los Angeles Times, 2006).¹¹ The series of novels Dertogada (2009) and Ramatohara (2010) by Yismaeke discuss the election and this scientist in a disguised way. The representations of the political events of the EPRDF government are analyzed in chapter six.

2.3. Conclusion

This chapter discussed the theoretical concepts that are used in the study and provided the historical and political background in order to create the context of the study. Some considerable level of discussion is made on the concepts: literature, politics, history, representation, and the link between them, and the literary critical approaches, the New Historicism, System Theory, and Critical Discourse Analysis and the interrelationships between the concepts. A description of the three political periods in Ethiopian history and the main events that took place during those times are also presented.

¹¹ Different public rumors have been disseminated about the cause; some suspect the Ethiopian government might have its hand in his death; some others suspect that the United States of America might have hijacked him (there are even some unofficial documents in the internet related to these issues)

Chapter Three

Analyses and Interpretations of the Representations of Political Events of the Pre-war and the War Periods of Haileselassie (1930-1941) in Selected Amharic Novels

3.1. Introduction

The analyses and interpretations of the political events of Haileselassie's government, which are discussed in chapter two under the heading of "the contexts of the study", are made in two chapters since the discussion of the political events of the period is too broad to be handled in a single chapter. Hence, the political events of the pre-war and the war periods are presented in chapter three, while the post-war political events are presented in chapter four. The analyses made in these two chapters contribute to the efforts made in answering the research questions. In other words, the analyses made in these two chapters (three and four) identify the specific political events represented in the selected Amharic novels of the Imperial period, how these events of the Imperial period are represented, and how the political contexts influenced the political discourses of the Amharic novels and vice versa. It also answers the other research questions (listed in 1.3.) based on the context of the political period.

The discussion below presents not only the political events of the pre-war and the war periods, but also the ways in which the political events are represented.

3.2. Discussion

This discussion is organized based on the chronological sequence of the political events - Analyses and Interpretations of Representations of political Events of the Pre-wartime, and Analyses and Interpretations of Representations of political Events of the Wartime in the selected Amharic novels. Each category discusses different political events closely related to the respective political period. For example, a novel that represents a certain political event is discussed in its context or setting (under the topic that is related it). The novels selected for discussion of the pre-war and the war politics are *Ariaya* (1948) by Girmachew, *Agazi* (1956) by Woldegiorgis, while the discussion of the war politics part adds *Baša Qit'aw* (1983) by Saheleselassie. The first two novels were published in the post contemporaneous time of the events within the political period while the last one was published in the post Haileselassie period.

3.2.1. The Pre-war Politics: 1930-1935.

This section deals with representations of the politics related to the writing of the first constitution, the formation of a more centralized government and unity, education and modernization. These political events are represented in the novels, *Ariaya* and *Agazi*, though the events are not the main concerns of the novels. Both of the novels were written in the 1940s. Some parts of *Agazi* were published in a newspaper in 1946, five years after the restoration of independence (1969, 2nd edition: 2). *Ariaya* was also written in 1946, although it was not published until 1949 (1968, 2nd edition: inside cover). The novels are selected for discussion because they are representative of the period and more canonical than the other novels that deal with the politics¹².

The political situations of the pre-war period are reflected in the novels, *Ariaya* and *Agazi*, especially in the first 15 chapters of *Ariaya*. For instance, progressive measures that Haileselassie took were raised by Araya¹³, the major character, in the conversation that he makes with a Russian who was travelling with him in a train (1968: 41-42). The Russian tells Araya that the first thing Ethiopians should do is to unite among each other and organize themselves under the umbrella of their flag; then, they have to plan what is important to the development of their country and pave the road to civilization for the sake of the new generation under the leadership of Emperor Haileselassie.

Araya, after explaining what Haileselassie has done with regard to the formation of centralized government and the appointment of officials, he further comments that the central government should only appoint governors at the higher levels, like the province and the higher districts, and that at the lower administrative district levels, people should elect their own local administrators so that the elected persons primarily serve the people rather than the government. Araya's comments are read in the following extract (1968:145):

ባገራችን አሁን ባለው ያስተዳደር ሁኔታ አገረ ገዢዎች በመላ መንግስት
የሾማቸው ናቸው እንጂ ያገሩ ሕዝብ የመረጣቸው ላገሩ ተወላጅነት ወይም

¹² The novels (especially *Ariaya*) were used as texts in the Amharic language curriculum of the period (Molvaer, 1997: 67). They are usually discussed in literature classes as illustrations of early Amharic novels. *Ariaya* is also credited for “some innovative elements” (Fique, 1983: 86 – 97; Taye, 1986: 59) perhaps for its use of some literary techniques like description, dialogue and ellipsis.

¹³ I wrote the title of the novel as *Ariaya* while its major character as Araya.

ነዋሪነት ያላቸው አይደሉም። ሥራቸውም የመንግስትን ህግ ማስከበር ነው እንጂ ስለህዝቡ ጥቅምና ጉዳት አላቢና ተከራካሪ እንዲሆኑ በተለይ የሚገደዱ አይደሉም። ነገር ግን ይህ ሁኔታ ሊሆን የሚገባው ላውራጃው ጠቅላይ ገዥና ለወረዳው ነው እንጂ የቀበሌ ሹምና አማካሪዎች የማዘጋጃ ቤት ሹም ጭቃ ሹሞች በህዝብ የተመረጡና ላገሬውና ለሕዝብ በቀጥታ ሀላፊ መሆን አለባቸው።

[In the existing situation of our country, governors are appointees of the state rather than the people. The appointees are not indigenous persons or do not belong to the particular community that they administer. Their job is to ensure law and order; they are not compelled to stand for the people and fight for the rights and benefits of the community. This is actually expected of governors appointed by the state; however, those local chiefs, advisors and heads of Municipalities should be directly elected by the people so as they will be responsible to the community.]

The dialogue between Araya and the Russian (1968: 137-150) indirectly reveals the existence of a highly centralized government in the pre-war years of Haileselassie; however, *Araya* (1968: 137-150) suggests that there was a need to improve the government system. This is an example of problem solving on the part of writers in which the novelist suggests solution to problems with the purpose of bringing change in the administrative system and politics. This goes in line with the principle of New Historicism (see chapter two, the conceptual frame works) that literature is shaped by context and history; and in turn literature shapes context and history; or literature brings change in context and history (Brannigan, 2001:169-170).

The novel, *Ariaya*, reflects the need for writing a new constitution that helps the country to introduce modern political and administrative systems. This is reflected, for instance, in the dialogue between Araya and an old man with whom he shares a room in the train; Araya says (1968:142):

አሁን የኢትዮጵያ ንጉሥ ነገስት መንግስት ባለበት ሁኔታ ስላገር አገዛዝ መዝመሪያ ደንብና መሠረት ማቆም የሚያስችሉ ነገር ነው እስካሁን ያለውን ልምድና ያገር አገዛዝ አሻሽሎ መለወጥ ያስፈልጋል።

[In the present objective situations of the Ethiopian government, urgent priority must be given to writing a constitution. The traditional system of rule and administration must be improved and changed.]

Ethiopia, of course, had its constitution before the novel was published. A revised constitution was written after the war, in 1955 (2002:140), in response to demands like what was suggested in the novel. Once the first constitution was set, Haileselassie

tried to form a centralized government, and appointed ministers from among young elites, rather than the aristocratic class.

The young non aristocrat ministers were not in good terms with the aristocrats, for they thought that the latter were obstacles for them and for the new development plan. Regarding this relationship, the secretary of the Ethiopian Consul in Djibouti, a character in the novel, says to Araya as follows (1968: 113-114):

ንጉሠ ነገሥቱ ራሳቸው የወጣቱ ወገን መሆናቸውን የሕይወት ታሪካቸውና የሠሩት ስራ ሁሉ ያስረዳል። እሳቸውን ወገን አድርገን ከያዘን እንዴት ማሸነፍ ይሳነናል? እነዚያን እንቅፋት የሚሆኑትን አስወግዶ ሥልጣኑን ሁሉ በወጣቶች እጅ ማግባት ርምጃችንን በፕሮግራም ማጣደፍ ነው። ያን ጊዜ ሕዝቡ አዲሱን ህግ ይቀበል የለምን?

[The Emperor is in favour of the youth as it can be understood from his life history and what he has accomplished so far. How on earth could we be defeated having the government on our side? We have to eliminate those obstacles to our development, take away the power from them and give it to the younger generation with a view to accelerate our progress according to plan. Will not the people accept the new constitution then after?]

The young diplomat and Araya, as change seeking young educated Ethiopians, consider the old system and the aristocrats as obstacles to change.

The politics of the unity of the people is the other topic reflected in different pages of the novel (1968: 42, 106). For Araya and the passengers who were having discussions regarding Ethiopia, the formation of central government cannot be accomplished without the unity of the people. To bring that unity, different programs must be planned and implemented. Education is one method that could bring unity. Araya, in his conversation with the old aristocrat whom he met on the train, argues (1968: 149):

ኢትዮጵያ አገራችን ምንም ባንድ መንግስት ያለች አንድ አካል ብትሆንም በያውራጃዎቹ የመቀናናትና የመናናቅ መንፈስ መኖሩ የተረጋገጠ ነው። እንደዚሁ ትግሬ ከሸዋ፣ ሸዋ ከጎንደር፣ ጎንደር ከጎዣም፣ ጎዣም ከኦሮሞ፣ ክርስቲያን ከእስላም የርስ በርስ የመንፈስ ልዩነት አያጣም። ይህን ከጥንት ተያይዞ የመጣውን ቅሪት መንፈስ ለማጥፋትና የሕዝብ አንድነት አስተካክሎ ለመመስረት ተማሪ ቤትን በደንብ ማደላደልና የተመሳሰለ አንድ አይነት የትምህርት ፕሮግራም መወሰን ያስፈልጋል።

[Although Ethiopia is a country ruled under a central government, the existence of contempt and jealousy among the people of different provinces is real. There are always differences emanating from ethnicity between the

people of the Tigre and the Shawa, the Shawa and the Gondar, the Gondar and the Gojam, the Gojam and the Oromo¹⁴, and the Christian and the Muslim . . . It is very crucial to expand schools and set the same kind of educational program in order to solve the residue of the past and create a sense of unity among the people.]

This idea is further expressed in different parts of the novel in discussions that Araya holds with different characters, such as the secretary of the Ethiopian consul in Djibouti (1968: 114 - 115).

The themes of modern education and civilization have been reflected in the second novel, *Agazi*. The novel reflects the issue in its first eight chapters. Regarding the development and expansion of education and civilization, the major character, Agazi, gives credit to Haile Selassie. He considers the aristocrats as obstacles to the expansion of education and civilization (1969: 15):

የትምህርት ቤትንስ ማካው የሚመስርተው? ለሃገሩ አሳቢና ተቆርቋሪ የሆነ ታላቅ መሪ ነዋ። እንዲህ ያለውን መሪ ማካው የሚረዳው? ፈጣሪ። በዚህ መሠረት ግርማዊ ንጉሠ ነገሥት ቀዳማዊ ኃይለሥላሴ የህዝባቸው ዓይን እንዲከፈትና የአዕምሮው ዓይነ ሞራ እንዲገፈፍ ዓይን አብራ የሆነውን ትምህርት ከሕጻናት ጋር ስለአስተዋወቁት ወጣቶቻችን ተምረው በእውቀት አብበው ሥልጣኔን አፍርተው ከፍ ያለውን አገልግሎት የሚያበረክቱበት ጊዜ ደርሷል።

[Who is going to open the schools? Of course, a great leader who is highly concerned and thoughtful about his country will do that. Who will support such a leader? God. Thus, His Majesty Haile Selassie I has introduced the children with eye-opening education that will enlighten the people. Therefore, the time has come when our youth will blossom with knowledge and give the fruits of civilization to their people]

Ariaya and *Agazi* represent the aforementioned political realities explicitly. The representations are supportive of the government of Haile Selassie, while they condemn the aristocrats.

3.2.2. Politics Related to the Italian Occupation and the Resistance Movement: 1936 - 1941.

One of the great political events of the Imperial period was the Italian occupation and the resistance movement that took place from 1936 to 1941. A number of political

¹⁴ The word “Galla”, rather than “Oromo” is used in the original text. The first word is derogatory. Hence the latter word is used for the ethnic people are called by the name “Oromo” rather than the word “Galla”.

events related to the occupation are represented in some pre and post 1974 revolution novels. In addition to the two previously discussed novels, *Ariaya* and *Agazi*, *Īnīdāwāt'ač Qärüč* (1956), by Assefa, *Alimotikum Biyä Aliwašim* (1947), by Mekonen Endalkachew, *Yämayič'äw Qusiläña* (1948), by Mekonen Zewdie are pre 1974 novels while *Baša Qit'aw* (1983), by Sahleselassie, *Adabay* (1982), by Tilahun, *Näs'anät* (1988), by Zenaneh, and *Īsikädar* (2010), by Dawit are post 1974 novels that deal with the politics. All these post 1974 novels with the exception of *Īsikädar*, were published in the Darg period, while the latter was in EPRDF period.

Among these pre and post 1974 novels, *Ariaya*, *Agazi* and *Baša Qit'aw* are selected for discussion because they are assumed to be representative and more 'canonical' than the other novels as described earlier. *Baša Qit'aw* is a post-revolution novel written by an experienced writer who has written a number of novels both in Amharic and English. The selected novels have different perspectives regarding controversial political events like the exile of Haileselassie to Europe.

Since *Ariaya* and *Agazi* were written in 1946, five years after the end of the war, they depict a fairly fresh memory of the authors about the politics of the war and the state of progress observed in the first five years of the post-war period of Haileselassie.

Although the author, Girmachew, claims that his novel, *Ariaya*, is historical (1968: title page), it is simultaneously biographical and political. It is historical because Maychew and some pre and post-war historical political events are the topics of the novel. It is biographical because there are some resemblances between the life and experiences of the father of the novelist, Teklehawariyat,¹⁵ and Araya, the major character of the novel (Girmachew, 1968; Teklehawariyat, 2007).

In *Ariaya*, there are many references to real historical political events like the battle of Adwa where Emperor Menelik defeated the attempt of Italian colonialism for the first

¹⁵ Like the character, Araya, the father of the author, Teklehawariyat was born in Shawa. He grew up in Harar (with the governor, Ras Mekonen, the father of Haileselassie), and trained in Europe studied agriculture in France (of course Teklehawariyat has further training in military science in Russia). Once they were at home, both Teklehawariyat and Araya were first ambitious to dedicate their knowledge to the mother country, Ethiopia, and its people and government. They were eager to bring change in the system of administration and civilization, but after a while retreated because some officials of the government of Haileselassie did not welcome them. Thus, both individuals prefer to be self employed in private modern farming (Girmachew, 1968, Teklehawariyat, 2007).

time, the 1934 Wal-Wal conflict, which was the pretext for the battle of Maychew. In connection to the Italo-Ethiopian (Maychew) war, historical places like Amba-Aradow, Shire and Maychew, and historical figures like Haileselassie, Ras Kassa, Ras Emiru, Ras Mulugeta, and historical dates during the occupation like “Yekatit” 12 (19 Feb., 1937), the massacre day of the Ethiopians for an attempted assassination of General Graziani and victory day (5 May, 1941), are referred in the novel. The novel seems to tell so much about the politics of the period, arguably, even more than what the actual history tells us about the period. As a fictional representation of the war the novel gives accounts and descriptions of the social and cultural milieu; it tells rumours, opinions, feelings and suspicions disseminated among the people by means of the interactions of the characters. Such descriptions of memory and knowledge found from social and cultural milieu are important in understanding about the politics of the period (Nora, 1989; Wood, 1994).

Baša Qit’aw is also a historical-political novel, organized after extensive reading that the author made on the historical subject, Maychew (1983: back cover). Although the main characters are fictional, the novel makes lots of references to historical figures. Most of the historical figures, places, and dates identified in *Ariaya*, are also alluded in *Baša Qit’aw*.

Like *Ariaya* and *Baša Qit’aw*, *Agazi* deals with Maychew politics. It is based, as the author claims, on the experience of his relative (*Agazi*, 1969: 3) who seems to be represented by the character narrator, Agazi. Unlike the two novels, *Agazi* refers only to some of the historical places, figures, and events such as the Wal-Wal conflict, Maychew and Haileselassie. Since the character narrator, Agazi, was abroad during the war, he had no first hand information to tell his readers. The character tells readers what he hears from close friends, relatives and his day and night dreams. In his dreams, his mother country, Ethiopia, St. Mary and David come to him, update him on the events and console him. This devise of representation of the war and the psychology of the people through dreams is one of the traditional methods in which the memory and psychological experiences of people are represented and passed from generation to generation (Nora, 1989) (In connection to this point, for instance, many Ethiopian elders believe that St. George fought the Italians, favouring the Ethiopians and Emperor Menelik II at the battle of Adwa. It was also a common practice for

Ethiopian Christian leaders to take their favourite arc to the battle field with them believing that the saints or martyrs will stand on their side (such stories are told in the book, *Yähabäša Jäbädu* (2010), Amharic translation of, *Habešskâ Odysea* (1989), a true account of the experiences of the Czech Republican author, Adolf Parlesak, regarding the Battle of Maychew).

Agazi further reflects his ideas on colonialism and specifically, about Eritrea, the former province of Ethiopia and its ports (this was a time when Eritrea was under Italian Colonial rule). The character narrator, Agazi, on his way to Europe raises the issues when he sees the sea and ports which formerly belonged to Ethiopia. He regrets so much about the situation and hopes that Eritrea and its ports will be returned to Ethiopia. The character's prophecy that was told seven years before the federation and seventeen years before the reunion became true with Eritrea's reunion, first as a federation in 1952, and then a total reunion in 1962 with Ethiopia.

Although Italy invaded Ethiopia from different directions of the country – from the north, southeast, and south - the novels, *Ariaya*, *Baša Qit'aw* and *Agazi* do not represent the south-eastern and southern fronts. The reason for *Ariaya* not to represent these fronts might be that the story followed the journey of the central character, Araya, who accompanied Haileselassie to the northern front, Maychew. Like *Ariaya*, *Baša Qit'aw* sets the settings in Tigre, Wollo and Shawa provinces. Therefore, most of the political events that are represented in the novels and discussed in this study are mainly related to the northern fronts, rather than the southern and southeastern fronts. Surprisingly, it is in the southeastern and southern fronts that better resistances were shown in the actual war than in the northern fronts (Bahru, 2002a:166-167). Speculations could be made as to why most Amharic novels that deal with the politics of Maychew do not represent the southern and the south-eastern fronts. One of the reasons for the novels to focus on the northern fronts might be that the north was the main war front. The second reason could be related to the fact that most novelists and historians usually write history in connection with the king/s and the most important persons in the hierarchy, rather than dealing with lower officials.

The focus of the historians and the novelists in the northern front is Maychew, and not Amba-Allage or Temben or the Shire fronts. The reason probably is that the Maychew front was led by Haileselassie, while the other fronts were led by other lower ranking

leaders. Surprisingly, Maychew was the last battle, and only lasted not more than 13 hours (Bahru, 2002a: 157). This situation, as New Historicism, Bourdeau's System theory and CDA hold (see chapter 2.1.5.), could be a reflection of the influences of politics and history upon literature (Brannigan, 2001:169-179). The politics influenced novelists to write about the war as related to the experiences of people of the highest rank. The novelists could also have been influenced by the historical narration of the historians, because most history books narrate the history of kings, warlords and top officials rather than the ordinary people. Novels written with such a mode of representation tell so much about politics and power relationships, than mere historical facts that are recorded in black and white. The focus of New Historicism is on such kinds of representations of concealed power relationships rather than on mere reflection of historical facts in the novels (Brannigan, 2001: 170).

The representation of the political events related to the battle of Maychew could be divided into four phases: first, the preparation for war and the invasion; second, the combat, defeat and retreat of the Ethiopian army; third, the exile of the Emperor, the divide and rule policy of the Italian occupation, and guerrilla war; and fourth, the victory of Ethiopia, and the restoration of independence.

3.2.2.1. Preparation for the War and the Invasion

Regarding the first phase of the politics of Maychew, the preparation of Italy for the war, the Wal-Wal conflict that Italy used for provocation of the Maychew war, the invasion and the betrayals of some provincial governors are reflected in the novels, *Ariaya*, *Agazi* and *Baša Qit'aw*.

The Wal-Wal incident (5 december, 1934) is represented in the novels, especially in *Ariaya*, and in some history books (Paulos, 1987: 12-19; Berihun, 2000: 157; Bahru, 2002a: 153; Teklehawariyt, 2007: xxiv) as a provocative clash that showed Italy's interest to revenge Ethiopia forty years after its defeat at the Battle of Adwa. This provocative incident of the Wal-Wal conflict is represented in the novel, *Ariaya* (1968: 226 - 227), in the following manner:

ጣሊያኖች ካርባ ዓመት ወዲህ ማለት አድዋ ላይ ምኒሊክ ድል አድርገው
 ከመለሷቸው ገጥሞ ሊትዮጵያን ለመያዝ ያላቸውን ተስፋቸውን
 ቁማቸውንም የመበቀል ሐሳባቸውን እንዳልተወ የታወቀ ነው። ...
 የወልወል ግጭት ከብዙ ጊዜ ገጥሞ ከተዘጋጁት ወጥመዶችና የተንኮል
 ዘዴዎች የጠብ ማንሻ ምክንያቶች ውስጥ አንደኛው ሳይሆን አይቀርም።

[Italy, after its defeat at Adwa by Emperor Menilik II brooded over vendetta and did not abandon its idea of colonizing Ethiopia... The Wal-Wal conflict might be a pretext as well as one of the traps designed to pick a fight against Ethiopia.]

Agazi (1969: 8) also reflects the Wal-Wal incident as follows:

በ1927 ዓ. ም. ጣሊያን ፋሽስት የኢትዮጵያን በሥልጣኔ መፋጠንና ወደ ትልቅ ደረጃ ለመድረስ በዕውቀት መንገድ መገሥገሥ የግርማዊ ንጉሠ ነገሥትንም ታላቅ ታሪክና ትጋት ስለ ሰማች እንቅፋት ለመሆንና በግፍ የሥልጣኔያችንን ዕድገት ባጭር ለማስቀረት በምቀኝነትና በተንኮል በአጥቂነትና በግፍ የኢትዮጵያን ወሰን አልፋ በወልወል ላይ አደጋ ጣለች። በዚህ ምክንያት ጦርነት ሊሆን ነው የሚል ወሬ በየጋዜጣው ሁሉ ይገጥመኝ ጀመር።

[In 1935, Italy crossed the Ethiopian border and opened fire at a place called Wal-Wal because of its envy regarding the progress that Ethiopia made in the sphere of civilization and knowledge, and hearing the fame and dedication of Emperor Haileselassie. Regarding this, I came across different newsletters that predicted the inevitability of war.]

This same politics is stated in Adejumobi (2007: 71) as “the infamous Wal-Wal pretext was not only a deliberate provocation but also emerged as a test of endurance for the fluid nature of African physical and social mobility, the viabilities of transnational treaties, the exercise of power in colonial expansion, and competition over national rights”. The Wal-Wal conflict was a pretext, a provocation to invade Ethiopia and was a test of endurance. Many novels and the history books witness the same thing. Therefore, the representation of the event in the novels is more or less realistic and explicit as is found in history books. The representation, however, seems a little bit shallow as the Wal-Wal conflict is not the main concern of the novels. The event is positively represented, i.e, favouring the Ethiopians for they were victims of the war. No difference is observed in the manner of representations of the Wal-Wal incident between the contemporary and the post contemporary novels.

Like the Wal-Wal conflict, Italy’s preparation for the Maychew war is reflected in the aforementioned novels. Italy began preparation for the war earlier than the Wal-Wal conflict. The country made enormous preparations in its army, armament, and warplanes. Regarding the army, Italy recruited from its colonies, Libya, Eritrea and Somalia, and transported the men and the armaments to the nearby Ethiopian borders

(Bahru, 2002a: 150 - 160). This issue of preparation for the Maychew war is explained in the novel, *Ariaya* (1968: 230) in the following way:

የወልወል ግጭት እንደተነሳ ሙሶሊኒ ወታደሩንና መሣሪያውን ወደ አፍሪቃ ማንዝ ዝመረ ኤርትራና ሱማሊያ ባፍሪቃ ምድር ታይቶ የማይታወቅ የፈረንጅ ጦርና መሣሪያ መከማቻ ሆነዋል። ጥቁር ለባሽ ፋሽስት የሊቢያ አረብ የሱማሌና የሐማሴን ወታደር በሺህና በሺህ ተሰልፈው የወረራ ትዕዛዝ ይጠብቃሉ። በየዕለቱ ሌት ተቀን ወታደር መሣሪያ ሥንቅ መኪና ከኢጣሊያ አገር በመርከብ በምጥዋና በመቃድሾ ይጎርፋል። ... የለም ጦርነቱ የሚቀር አይደለም።

[As the Wal-Wal conflict started, Mussolini began to transport his army and armaments to Africa. Somalia and Eritrea became stations for the army and the armaments. Thousands of Libyan, Somali, and the Hamassan colonial armies were ready for a command to invade Ethiopia. Every day and night Italy shipped out soldiers, armaments and vehicles through the ports of Massawa and Mogadishu. The war is inevitable.]

Baša Qit'aw (1983: 49, 51- 52), on its part, represents the preparations for war in the following manner:

በሠለጠነ ኃይል ብቻ ሳይሆን በመሣሪያም ኃይል በኢትዮጵያና በኢጣሊያ መሐከል የነበረው አለመመጣጠን እንደሰማይና ምድር የተራራቀ ነበር፤ በአንድ በኩል የሚታየው ጦርና ጎራዴ ያረጁና ከጥቅም ውጭ ለመሆን የተቃረቡ የተኩስ መሣሪያዎች...በሌላ በኩል የሚታየው ስፍር ቁጥር የሌለው የጦር አይሮፕላን፣ ታንክና ብረት ለበስ ነበር።...

ጄኔራል ደቦኖ በብዙ ሚሊዮን የሚቆጠር ሊሬ ወጪ አድርጎ የምጽዋን ወደብ ሲያስፋፋ...የአውሮፕላን ማረፊያ ሜዳዎችን በየስፍራው ሲያሰራ ከምጽዋ እስከ አስመራ የተዘረጋውን የባቡር መስመር ሲያሳድስ ይህንና ይህን የመሳሰለውን ሁሉ ሲያሳድስ...ለኤርትራ እድገት የተቆረቆረ መስለኝ ሁላችንም ተገርመን ነበር...አሁን ግን እውነተኛው ምክንያት ገሀድ ወጣ።...ጄኔራል ደቦኖ ያንን ሁሉ ወጪ አድርጎ ያንን ሁሉ እንቅስቃሴ ያካሄደው...ለዛሬው ወረራ ለመዘጋጀት ነበር!

«ከጣሊያን አገር ስንት የፋሽስት ወታደር እንደተላከ ስምተሃል ለመሆኑ?»

« ሦስት መቶ ሺህ፤ አዎ ሦስት መቶ ሺህ የታጠቀ የፋሽስት ወታደር... ጥቁር ሸሚዝ ለባሽ፤...የሚመጣው ወታደር ቁጥር የለውም፤ የሚራገፈው መሣሪያ ቁጥር ስፍር ቁጥር የለውም...»]

[“There was a world of difference between the Italian and the Ethiopian forces regarding skilled manpower and armaments. On the Ethiopian side, the types of weapons that they carried were spear, sword and old model and outdated guns . . .while on the Italian side there were numerous warplanes and tanks. . .”

“On wrong assumption, we were astonished by the Italians, when General De Bono expanding the port of Massawa, built airports, and rebuilt the Massawa-Asmara railroad in many liras for the development of Eritrea; but General De Bono constructed all these things in many Liras to facilitate the invasion of Ethiopia”.

“Have you heard the number of fascist soldiers that are sent from Italy to Ethiopia?”

“Three hundred thousand, yes three hundred thousand fascist soldiers ... soldiers with black shirts, there are no limits for the number of soldiers that came to Ethiopia . . . There are no limits for the number of armaments that enter the ports.”]

The extracts taken from the two novels show the extensive preparation that Italy had made for the war. They witness that Italy had been secretly preparing in terms of both manpower and armaments for many years before the invasion, and that its army was composed of Libyan, Somali, and the Hamassen soldiers, who were under the colonial rule of Italy.

This issue of preparation is explained in Bahru in a similar way to that of the novels except that it is expressed in Bahru in concrete terms using figures (2002a: 159):

In 1935, the Italians came benefiting from the latest in military technology; the arms blockade imposed on Ethiopia on various pretexts had deprived it of even a faint approximation to the Italian armoury. The total number of modern rifles on the Ethiopian side was estimated at between 50,000 and 60,000; the level of ammunition was perhaps twice that the Italians were to use in one battle alone. The disparity in machine-guns and artillery was no less glaring. But the fatal advantage was in the air, where an Italian air force, numbering over 300 aircraft on the northern front and about 100 aircraft on the southern front, had the sky to itself. Ethiopia had a fleet of eleven aero planes, of which only eight were serviceable, and they were used mainly for transport. Air superiority assumed an even more lethal dimension with Italian use of the prohibited mustard - gas.

In connection to the superiority of Italy in fire power and man power, Bahru (2002a: 155) states: “In addition to their technical superiority, the Italians outnumbered the Ethiopians by nearly four to one. This numerical superiority enjoyed by the Italians was a striking anomaly of the whole war”. By the same token, Tomasili (n.d.) as referred by Paulos (1987: 35) explains that Italy began the war with 360,000 soldiers, 3,000,000 tons of armaments and guns and more than 500 warplanes and 300 vehicles.

Contrary to what was happening on the Italian side, the poor preparation of the Ethiopian Army, its inexperienced war leaders and anarchism observed in the army

are explained in *Ariäya*. For instance, Araya, the main character, feels pity after realizing the poor quality of armaments and logistics that the Ethiopian soldiers use for the operation, and the poor training in modern war techniques (1968: 232 - 234). Girmachew, the author of the novel, also explains the poor preparation of the Ethiopian army in the introduction of the book of the autobiography of his father, Teklehawariyat (2007). Therefore, the representations made on the preparations for war between the Italians and Ethiopians in terms of armaments and man power in the novels are realistic just like historical books such as that written by Bahru (2002a). The novels, irrespective of their publication years represented the politics explicitly favouring the Ethiopians. The reason for the explicit representations of the political events favouring the Ethiopians is that Italy, not Ethiopia, was to blame for the war.

The invasion of Ethiopia by the Italians was made in different directions. In the north, Italy controlled strategic places before the Ethiopian Army reached the fronts. For example, Adigrat, Axum, Adwa, Mekele were some of the war fronts that Italy had earlier occupied.

In addition to its preparation, Italy was able to benefit from some treasonous provincial leaders like Hailesilassie Gugsa of Tigray (Paulos, 1987: 52 - 54; Bahru, 2002a: 154). With regard to the issue of treason, the character, Araya (1968: 228 - 229) describes that the Italians bribed many feudal lords of the former provinces of Gondar, Wollo, Shawa, Harerege and the like. Similarly, Bahru (2002a: 153-154) explains that Italy used the ‘divide and rule policy’ to disunite the people of Ethiopia through the consular office in different parts of the country, such as Gojam and Gondar, and convinced some aristocrats like Haileselassie Gugsa of Tigray to betray Haileselassie. The novel, *Baša Qit’aw* does not mention the traitor by name, but it alludes to Haileselasse Gugsa, a traitor who joined the Italians soon after the war began. It is stated in the novel as follows (1983: 81-82):

ጄኔራል ደቦኖ ያድዋ ይዞታውን አጠናክሮ ወደ ደቡብ አቅጣጫ ገፍቶ በመምጣት አዲግራትን አክሱምንና መቀሌን በየተራ በቦምብ ደብድቦ ይዟቸው ነበር። እነዚህን ከተሞች በያዘበት ወቅት ተከላካይ ጦር እጅግም አላጋጠመውም፤ እንዲያውም ይብስ ብሎ በሰላም ጊዜ አገረገዥዎች ከወረራው ወዲህ አዝማቾች ከነበሩት መሐከል አንደኛው ለጠላት እጁን መስጠቱ ተሰማ...ይህ የፊውዳል ገዥ በመሀል መንግስት ላይ ቁርሾ ነበረው። አባቱ የመላ ትግራይ ገዥ ሆነው ከኖሩ በኋላ እሳቸው ሲያርፉ በእርሳቸው እግር ተተክቶ መላውን ትግራይ ለመግዛት ምኞት ነበረው።

[General De Bono once he strengthened the Adwa front, moved towards the south and bombarded and captured the towns of Adigrat, Aksum and Mekele. No strong defensive war met the General when he controlled the cities. The striking thing is that one of the people who served the Ethiopian government as an administrator during the peace time surrendered to the Italians when the war started... This feudal lord and governor of a part of Tigray had a grudge against the government of Haileselassie for he had ambitions to govern the whole province of Tigray in place of his late father.]

Therefore, the representations of the politics of the Wal-Wal conflict and the preparation of the two countries, Italy and Ethiopia, for the war are realistic, and are similar to the explanations given in historical documents.

3.2.2.2. The War, the Defeat and Retreat of the Ethiopian Army

In relation to the second phase, the war, the victory of Italy, the retreat of the Ethiopian army, the problems that the retreating army encountered from some local people of Rayana Azebo and Lasta (bandits, in the case of *Baša Qit'aw*), and the death of Ras Mulugeta at Amba-Aradom front are represented in *Ariaya* and *Baša Qit'aw*.

In connection with the combat, the two novels present the cases from different perspectives. *Ariaya* focuses on the combat held at Maychew front, and not those held in Adwa, Mekele, Shire, Amba-Allage and Amba-Aradom, because the central character is seen accompanying Haileselassie from Addis Ababa via Dessie to Maychew. The fight at Amba-Allage or any other front is explained using secondary sources that the character narrator heard from ordinary soldiers who were retreating from the front and the local people (1968: 237 - 250). Moreover, no description of the wars at the Adwa, Mekele, Amba-Allage and Amba-Aradom fronts is made; rather the accounts of the defeat and the retreat of the army and the criticism that the narrator makes are reflected as follows (1968: 241 - 42):

ከጦር ግንባር የሚመጣው ወሬ ብዙም የሚያስደስት አልነበረም፡፡ የራስ እምሩ ጦር ብቻ በሽሬ ግንባር ወደ ፊት መግፋቱ ሲነገር ሌሎች ሦስቱ ታላላቅ ጦሮች የራስ ሥዩም የራስ ካሳና የራስ ሙሉጌታ አልቀናቸውም ይባላል፡፡... ራስ ስዩም ድል ሆነው ከጥቂት ሰዎች ጋር ለማምለጥ ቻሉ ራስ ካሳም እንደዚሁ ጦራቸው ተፈቶ ተመልሰዋል፡፡ ራስ ሙሉጌታም የአላጌን በር ለቀው በደ ጌላ ጉዞ ይዘዋል ይባላል፡፡...

ራስ ሙሉጌታ ይችን በር (አምባላጌ) ይዘው እስከ መጨረሻው ወታደር መጋደል ነበረባቸው እንጂ ይህን የተፈጥሮ ምሽግ ትተው የት ላይ ሊመክቱ ወደኋላ መጡ! . . . ይህን በር የለቀቁበት ምክንያት በኋላ ስንሰማ ልዩ ልዩ ነው ይሉናል። ግማሹ ጣሊያን የመርዝ ጢስ ስለ ጣለ ለመመከት አልተቻለም ሰውም ከብቱም ሲያልቅባቸውና ከኋላቸው ራያና አዘቦ ሲከባቸው ወደ ኋላ ማፈግፈግ ግዴታ ሆኖባቸው ነው ይላል። ግማሹም ወታደሩ ብዙ ወራት በመሰለፍ ሥንቁና ጥይቱ አልቆበት ዘወትር በቦምብና በመድፍ በመትረየስ መደበደብ ሰልችቶት ሌት ሌት እየከዳ በመመለሱ ነው ይላል።

ግማሹም የጦር አለቆች ወደፊት እንግፋና ጠላት የያዘውን ቦታ እናስለቅቀው ሲሉ ራስ ሙሉጌታ ስላልፈቀዱ የጦር አለቆች ስምምነት በማጣታቸው ጦሩ ተፈታ ይላል። እንግዲህ እውነተኛውን ነገር ታሪክ ይመርምረው (1968: 242)።

[The rumors that came from the war fronts were not pleasant. Except the army commanded by Ras Imiru at Shire front, the other three great divisions of armies which are commanded by Ras Seyoum, Ras Kassa and Ras Mulugeta in other fronts were not successful... Ras Seyoum and few remnant soldiers escaped. Ras Kassa also retreated because his army is defeated. Ras Mulugeta has already retreated leaving the Allage strategic place...

Where does Ras Mulugeta retreat leaving the strategic natural fortress, Amba-Allage? He should have fought to the last man in the front! As we have heard rumors later, Ras Mulugeta left the natural barrack for different reasons. Some say that his men retreated as they could not resist the poisonous gas that the warplanes of Italy dropped and the death of his soldiers and horses and mules; and they were encircled by the people of the Rayana Azebo who robbed the soldiers. Others say that, Ras Mulugeta's men deserted because they run short of bullets and provisions; they could not withstand the bombardment of the Italian war planes, and bored of the situations for they were stationed idle in the war fronts for months.

Some others say that there was no coordination and agreement between the warlords since Ras Mulugeta rejected the plan that other war leaders designed to attack the barrack of Italy at Amba-Allage front. Anyway, let history investigate the truth.]

The novel, *Baša Qit'aw*, focuses on Amba-Allage and Maychew fronts as the narrator tells the story following the roots followed by the main character, Basha Kitaw¹⁶. Basha Kitaw marches up to Dessie together with Haileselassie, and then goes to Amba-Aradom to fight under the regiment of Ras Mulugeta, while Haileselassie remained stationed in Dessie. After the defeat of the Ethiopian army and the death of Ras Mulugeta at Amba-Aradom front, his men retreated to Dessie and joined

¹⁶ I wrote the title of the novel as *Baša Qit'aw* while its major character as Basha Kitaw

Haieselasie's force, and Basha Kitaw once again travelled to the Maychew front with the force. Despite being the leader of the northern fronts, no mention of the contribution of Haileselassie is made by the narrator or the other characters in the novel. This happened perhaps for two reasons. Firstly, the narrator tells the story following the foot path of the major character, Basha Kitaw, from which the novel takes its name. Secondly, the narrator might have deliberately ignored Haileselassie perhaps undermining the role of the Emperor in the war fronts.

These issues of the war at different fronts, the defeat of the Ethiopian army led by Ras Mulugeta, Ras Emiru, and Ras Seyoum, and the death of Ras Mulugeta are stated in Bahru (2002a: 162 - 163) and Paulos (1987: 55) in nearly a similar way of presentation of the two novels above (1968: 241-242). The following excerpt from Bahru (2002a: 154-155) shows the similarity:

The Ethiopian forces were ranged along three fronts. In the west were the forces of Gojam and Bagemder commanded by Ras Emeru Haylasellase. In the centre were the forces of Ras Seyum Mangasha and Ras Kasa Haylu the latter as commander - in - chief of the northern front, to the chagrin of the Minister of War, Ras Mulugeta Yeggazu, who had expected to assume supreme command but was put in charge of the eastern most columns. The major weakness of the Ethiopian army was lack of co-ordination between the different columns. There was little co-operation even between the relatively nearer central column and the right flank commanded by Mulugeta - a situation exacerbated by the mutual antipathies of the leaders. The major offensive launched by the Ethiopians, which aimed at isolating Maqale, foundered on this rock of poor coordination. In spite of the valiant efforts to dislodge the Italians from their entrenched positions, the latter won, if at considerable cost, what was known as the first Battle of Tamben (20 - 24, January 1936).

The repulse of the Ethiopian counter - offensive emboldened the Italians to launch a mass offensive of their own. They first turned their attention to the Imperial troops commanded by Ras Mulugeta who had established themselves on the nearly impregnable natural fortress of Amba-Aradom, to the south of Maqale. Thanks mainly to Italian superiority in the air, the battle proved to be the reverse of the Battle of Amba Alage in 1895. To his discomfiture, the veteran of Adwa saw a replay of what had happened forty years earlier a force which occupied a formidable stronghold losing the battle. Only, this time, it was the Ethiopians who were on the losing side. Their losses were estimated at 6,000 dead. Mulugeta himself was killed during the confused retreat.

The fighting at the Maychew front was the last one, after several battles were fought and the Ethiopian armies were defeated at the Amba-Allage and Adwa fronts. The

reason for this was that the Emperor and his army marched from Dessie to Maychew lately, after they heard the death of Ras Mulugeta and the defeat of his army (Bahru, 2002a: 156-157). The Italians had bombarded the city of Dessie for they had information that the Emperor had settled there. It was soon after these situations that the Emperor marched to Maychew, accompanied by some retreating army members of Ras Mulugeta and other war leaders. The march that the Emperor made to Maichew is narrated in the two novels, *Ariaya* (1968: 242 - 243) and *Baša Qi'taw* (1983: 104 - 108) and the history books, Bahru (2002a: 156 - 157) and Paulos (1987: 115 - 120). The following extract is from the novel *Ariaya* (1968: 242 - 243):

የራስ ሙሉጌታ መሞትና የጦራቸው መበተን ወሬ ደሴ እንደተሰማ ጃንሆይ በየካቲት 13 ቀን 1928 ዓ.ም. በግስጋስ ወደ ግንባር ተነሱ። እውነትም ከደሴ ጥቂት እንደራቁ ከዘመቻው እሚመለሱ ወታደሮች አገኙ። ብዙዎቹ መሣሪያ አልያዙም ልብሳቸውንም ተገፈዋል። አንዳንዶቹም ተሰልበዋል! ባካኋናቸውና በመልካቸው በፍጹም የወታደር መልክ አይታይባቸውም ነበር። መንፈሳቸውም ሞቷል ልባቸው ፈሷል።

[As news of the death of Ras Mulugeta and the dispersion of his troops reached Haileselassie, he marched quickly to the war front on 21 February, 1936. Not far from Dessie, he met soldiers retreating from the war fronts. Many of them had no arms; they were robbed their clothings. Some got their genitals mutilated. They did not look like soldiers. Their spirits were dead; their hearts were in their mouth.]

Tomaselli (n.d.) cited by Paulos (1987: 115) explains that the delay that the Emperor made at Dessie, before going to the Maychew front, gave opportunity to the Italians to strengthen their forts. Similarly, Bahru argues that the delay of the Emperor contributed to the defeat of the Ethiopian army at the Maychew front (2002a: 156-157):

It was inconceivable that the Italians, ensconced in their impregnable fortifications and enjoying the domination of the sky which was the hallmark of the whole war, could have been defeated by the Ethiopians. The problem was compounded for the latter by the procrastination that characterized the Emperor's command. Successive postponements of the attack squandered the only possible advantage the Ethiopians had - the element of surprise.

The delay of the Ethiopians in going to the front, their lack of coordination, the absence of military training, the low moral of the army, and the underestimation of the enemy without knowing the reality on ground are considered by the novel, *Ariaya*,

and the books, *Otobayogirafi :Yähiiwot Tarike* (2007: xxv) and Paulos (1987: 115-120) as factors that contributed to their defeat.

As can be observed from the discussion made so far, the invasion, war, defeat and retreat of the Ethiopian soldiers are reflected in *Ariaya* and *Baša Qit'aw*. The novels and history books reveal that the Emperor's delay to go to the combat at the Maychew front is one of the factors that contributed to the defeat of the Ethiopian army in that the enemy got ample time to build forts. Accordingly, both the novels and history books subtly make Haileselassie responsible for the defeat of the Army in the Maychew front.

In spite of this plausible representation of the events, the extent of the actual involvement of Haieselassie in the war front and his retreat are not reflected in the novels uniformly. For instance, while Haileselassie's involvement in the war is not treated in *Baša Qit'aw*, it is given some coverage in *Ariaya* and *Agazi*. The reason for *Baša Qit'aw* to ignore the case might be the discontent that the author has with regard to the role of Haileselassie in the Maychew battle. In other words, the author may believe that Haileselassie had no contribution in the defense war. Therefore, the unwillingness to represent the leadership of Haieselassie might be technically a deliberate negative portrayal of the Emperor; or a deliberate rejection of Haileselassie 'in silence'. The novel dared to ignore Haileselassie, perhaps since it was published after the 1974 revolution. For Fairclough (1995: 5), under-representation and un-representation/or silence of such an important point in discourse could be a revelation of some kind of ideology of the author or the discourse.

Ariaya (1968: 248) pretends to represent Haileselassie positively, as a wise leader who is careful about the well-being of his army, and a hero who fights like an ordinary soldier in bravery. But, from the description that the narrator makes about the retreats, readers can sense that the praise of the Emperor is only at surface level; rather, it seems to be a criticism on him. For instance, while the local people and bandits created problem on the retreating army, the narrator explains that the Emperor was giving commands while the reality was that he was protected by his people (encircled from every direction) from the bandits and the local people (1968: 255):

ጃንሆይን በመካከል አድርገው በቅሏቸውን ከበው በግራና በቀኝ ወታደሮቹ ተከታትለው እየተጓዙ መንገዱን ሲቀጥሉና ተኩስ ወደ ተሰማበት የመትረየስና የሩምታ ተኩስ ሲያደርጉ ብዙ ቀማኛና ሽፍታ መለሱ...

በሽሎ ከሚባል ጅረት ውስጥ ባላገሩ ተሰልፎ ዘማቹን ለመግፈፍ ተዘጋጅቶ እንደሚጠብቅ በተሰማ ጊዜ አስቀድሞ ሰው ተላክባቸው። ጃንሆይ ንጉሠ ነገሥቱ መሆናቸው ተነገራቸውና በሰላም ተሰናብተው በማግስቱ ግን ሽፍተው አናሳልፍም አሉ።

[When they retreated, the soldiers kept the Emperor and his mule in the middle and protected him from left and right; soldiers shoot randomly to where they heard the sound of guns and killed many rebels.

When they heard that some local people were ready to loot the military at a river called, Beshilo, they sent messengers to the local people to notify them that the Emperor was coming. Then Haileselassie crossed the river peacefully. However, the next day, they robbed the soldiers and blocked the way.]

The local people of Raya become an obstacle to the Emperor during his retreat from the war front. Some local people and bandits shot at the retreating soldiers in order to rob their guns. Furthermore, these people mutilated the genitals of some of the soldiers, an act which is considered as a mark of bravery among some ethnic groups of Ethiopia. Because of this, the soldiers were worried about Hailesellasie rather than about themselves. Hence, they escorted the Emperor who was travelling on mule back from the front, and requested that the local people let the Emperor pass safely. Irrespective of the fact that the emperor was concerned about his own safety, and not of his soldiers, the narrator praises the Emperor and makes him a hero; and under such circumstances, the narrator tells the readers that the Emperor took care of his people and controlled the situation. Yet, these un-contextualized and contradictory descriptions of the state of the Emperor and the environment do not convince the readers; they are more ironic rather than truthful accounts. The method of representation used in the case of the Emperor is implicit than explicit. The reason for this might be that the novel was written during Haileselassie's period. In addition, the author was one of the top officials of Haileselassie's government. Therefore it was hard for him to criticize the Emperor explicitly. Generally, we could say that *Baša Qit'aw* and *Ariaya* had, at least some negative representation of the Emperor.

On the other hand, *Agazi* reflects Haileselassie's involvement in the war and his retreat positively. The character narrator, *Agazi*, considers Haileselassie as a hero, and

considers the retreat as a strategy and a victory to Haileselassie and the people of Ethiopia (1969: 62). The reason for such a positive portrayal of the retreat of the Emperor might be either that the author is loyal to Haileselassie, as can be understood from the whole context of the novel, or the character narrator preferred the Emperor's retreat to death or to being taken captive, as can be read from the quotation below (1969: 62):

የዓይኔ ብርሃን የነጻነቴ ዓይን በማይጨው መካከል በጦር ሜዳ ላይ ተሰልፎ እሞታለሁ ብሎ በቆረጠ ጊዜ ማይጨውን የዌተርሎ እድል እንዳይገጥማት አጥብቄ ፈርቼ ነበር። ማይጨውን ግን ከዌተርሎ የተለየ እድል ስለ ገጠማት የጀግናውና የስመጥሩው መሪያችን ሕይወት ያለጥርጥር በግርማ ቀርቦ የነበረው ሞት ሊያገኘው አልቻለም።

አንበሳችን በግርማ ተመለሰ። ታማኞቹም 'ኩሎ ኃደግነ ወተሎናክ' ሲሉ ሐዋሪያት ክርስቶስን እንደተከተሉት ተከተሉት። ኩሎቹም ካንተ ከተለየን ዓለም ለምናችን እያሉ ከመንደር ወደ ዱር ተሰደዱ።....።

[I was afraid that Maychew might face the same fate as that of the Waterloo, when the light of my eye and the eye of my freedom was ready to die during the battle of Maychew. Fortunately the fate of the Maychew could not be the same to the Waterloo because death that was close to him could not get our famous and courageous leader.

Therefore, our hero retreated with a great courage. His loyalists accompanied him like the disciples followed Jesus saying to him: 'we left everything and then followed you'. The other half people went to the jungle saying, 'what is the world to us without you']

The extract shows the loyalty of the character narrator to the Emperor. Hence, as far as the representation of the political event related to the war, and the retreat is concerned, the novel, *Agazi*, seems to be supportive of Haileselassie.

3.2.2.3. The Exile of the Emperor, the Divide and Rule Policy of Italy, and the Guerrilla War

In the third phase, the exile of Haileselassie, the divide and rule policy of Italy, and the guerrilla war that patriots made in different parts of the country are reflected in the novels with different degrees of emphasis.

The principal character, *Agazi*, considers the exile of the Emperor as a change of war strategy, from gun battle to diplomatic war, initiated by the Emperor's loyalists. These

loyal people insisted that the Emperor quit the war and go in exile, rather than die in the battlefield (1969: 70):

የኢትዮጵያ ትንሳኤ ይሆኑ ዘንድ ስለተመደበ ህይወታቸውን ጠበቀ።
መኳንንቱም ጳጳሳቱም ሊቃውንቱም ተሰብስበው መብራታችን አትጥፋብን
በማለት ስለለመኑዋቸው የጦሩን እቅድ ለመለወጥ ወደኤውሮጳ ተሻገሩ።

[Haileselassie was saved for he was chosen to resurrect Ethiopia. The aristocrats, the cardinals of the church, the learned people came together and begged the Emperor, their light, not to fade and thus he went to Europe to change the war strategy.]

Two ideas are reflected in the extract above. On the one hand, the nobility seem to push the Emperor to stop the war and flee the country in order to keep his life safe from the Italians. On the other hand, it seems that the nobility wanted the emperor's exile to encourage him to appeal to the League of Nations.

Agazi does not give an account of the looting and random shooting that took place in Addis Ababa due to the power vacuum created for days (Bahru, 2002: 160). *Ariaya* (1968), on the other hand dedicates chapter 16 of the novel to the exile of the Emperor and the looting of Addis Ababa, and the focus was more on the looting than on the exile. The objective of the journey, the state of the meeting held to reach consent, and the members that accompanied Haileselassie are not reflected at all (1968: 258 - 269). The narrator of *Ariaya* explains (1968: 261):

ቀኑን ሙሉ ጃንሆይ ምክር ሲያደርጉ ነበር። ሰዉ የሚያወራው ብዙ ነበር።
ግማሹ ዕርቅ ሊደረግ ነው ግማሹ በከተማው ያለውን ጦር ሰብስበው ጠላትን
ለማገድ ወደ ፊት ሊሄዱ ነው፤ ግማሹ ወደ ሀረር ሊሄዱ ነው ይላል። ቀኑን
ሙሉ እንደዚሁ ግርግርና ወርወር ሲሆንና የጦር አለቆችና ሚኒስትሮች
ግርማዊነታቸው ዘንድ ሲገቡና ሲወጡ እንዲሁ ዋሉ።

ጉዞው ይፋ አልነበረም ይፋ ለማድረግም አመቺ ሁኔታም የለም።

[The whole day the Emperor held an advisory meeting. People said many things. Some said reconciliation shall be reached, some others said that the Emperor will reorganize the army and go to the war front; while some others said the Emperor will go to Harrar. There was unrest around the palace for the whole day, with Ministers and army chiefs going in and out frequently to the office of the Emperor. . .

The journey was not official; their was neither a convenient situation to make it official.]

The narrator says that, “people said many things” (1968: 261). But, why did the people of Addis Ababa frustrate and say many things? The reason probably was that the journey was secret; and the people needed the Emperor to organize them for guerrilla war as could be understood from the words of the narrator (1968: 242):

**የኢትዮጵያ ህዝብ ንጉሱን ካላየ በደህና አይዋጋም፤ መሪውን
አውራውን ይፈልጋል።**

[The people of Ethiopia do not fight courageously unless they have the king with them. The people need their leader, their head.]

The narrator, of course, seems to give hints about the decision of the parliament saying that ministers and warlords were frequently getting in and out of the office of the Emperor. This description perhaps suggests that a meeting regarding the journey might have taken place. Berihun (2000: 229) and Haileselassie (1973: 233 -245) also explain that the ministers decided his exile in the meeting held in Addis Ababa.

There are no other points discussed in *Ariaya* with regard to the exile or the journey. This neglect of representing the politics of the exile of Haileselassie in detail could be a deliberate technique by the author to hide the point that some regarded the exile as a self-imposed escape that resulted from fear of danger that the Emperor might have faced (Bahru, 2002a: 160). Writing about this ‘self-imposed’ issue of the exile of the Emperor overtly would be impossible during the period, because the novel could be censored or stopped from publication. The life of the author might also fall into danger. Had it not been for such reasons, the author, Girmachew, had rich knowledge about the overall politics of Maychew and Haileselassie as can be grasped from the narration made in the chapters of the novel and other historical documents. He had first-hand experience of the war, and stayed at the northern front for three months as a translator for Swedish experts. He was also in Addis Ababa during the assassination attempt on the life of Graziani and the subsequent massacre. The Italians also had detained him in an island called Azinara, together with other Ethiopians. After independence, Girmachew also served Haileselassie as a minister in different ministries and as an ambassador of Ethiopia to Europe and Latin American countries (Molvaer, 1997: 62 - 67).

Therefore, it is possible to assume that the author had enough information regarding the exile of Haileselassie. Accordingly, one could say that the writer shows his criticism or discontent with regard to the exile, through the technique of under-representation of the political event. In other words, the author does not seem to believe the claim that the Emperor's exile was meant for diplomatic purposes. This position held by the character, Araya, concerning the exile is similar to that of Teklehawariyat, a person in the real life. Teklehawariyat strongly objected the exile and explained it in person to Haileselassie. He said that the Emperor should have led the people and fought Italy using guerrilla war strategy. Some people of Dire-Dawa also objected the Emperor's exile (Teklehawariyat, 2007: xxvi).

In the novel, the auctorial narrator and the character narrator, on the one hand, pretend to be loyalists to Haileselassie; on the other, they reveal the truth through the comments that they make on some events and characters, and situations in which characters are involved. For instance, the narrator explains the feelings of the people about the exile of the Emperor and the capture of Addis Ababa by the Italians in the following way (1968: 272 - 273):

የኢትዮጵያ ህዝብ በማንም ሕዝብ ዘንድ እንደሚደርሰው ሁሉ በመዝናኛ የጠላት ቀንበር እንደተሰማው በመሪዎች ላይ ንዴት ገብቶት ነበር። የዚህ ሁሉ መከራ ሃላፊና ጥፋተኞች ባለሥልጣኖች ናቸው በማለት መሪር የሆነ ሐዘኑንና ወቅሳውን ሲያደርግ ይሰማ ነበር። እያደር ግን ድንጋጤውና ንዴቱ እየበረደ በረጋ አእምሮ ማሰብ ሲችል የመከራውን ትልቅነት ሲመለከተው የጣሊያንን ጉልበትና ተንኮል ሲረዳው ባለፈው ነገር መናደዱንና ተስፋ ቆርጦ በራሱ ጉዳይ መስነፉን ትቶ እንደገና ትግሉን ለመቀጠልና ለነጻነቱ ለሕይወቱ የመታገል ፈቃድ ታስቦት መሪዎች ይፈልግ ዝመር።

ነገር ግን ምንም እንኳ ህዝቡ በጎ ፈቃድ ሞልቶት ከልብ ቢታገል ጠቅላይ መሪ በማጣት ሹማምንት እርስ በርስ ለመስማማትና ጉልበታቸውን ባንድነት አድርገው ለመሥራት ባለመቻላቸው ድካማቸው ሁሉ እየባከነ ለጠላት ምቹ ሆነለት።

[Like any people in the world, the people of Ethiopia were angry with their leaders and soon felt the yoke of the enemy. They expressed their sorrow and anger, and made the leaders responsible for all this evil situation; gradually, when their anger vanished and started to realize the difficulty and malice and power of the Italians, they wanted leaders that could organize and lead them in the fight against the Italians.

Eventhough the people were willing to fight the Italians, they could not be successful since there was no 'täqlay meri' (central commander) who could

coordinate them; besides, the other officials or warlords were not in good terms with each other. These created a good opportunity to the enemy (emphasis mine).]

The quotations above show that people were disappointed with the leaders and made them responsible for the problems they experienced. Through time, however, the people understood the seriousness of the problem and the power of Italy, and decide to find leaders that could organize them to fight the occupiers and restore freedom. The quotation further tells that the courage that the people showed when fighting the Italians became futile, because the war leaders did not cooperate with each other, and the people did not have a commander, “ጠቅላይ መሪ” (“*t’äqlay märi*”), the Emperor.

From the foregoing arguments, one could say that the narrator was not interested in the exile of Haileselassie, and that the exile was not done based on the decision of the parliament; it was rather primarily designed to prepare safeway for Haileselassie and his family members.

In connection to the exile, the narrator also says, “ንጉሳችንም ተሰደዱ” (“*nīgusačiniim täsäädädu*”) [our king is exiled], and expresses his feeling as in the following (*Ariäya*, 1968: 275):

ጣሊያን ከቀድሞ ዝምሮ ሲያደባብን የነበረው ጠላታችን በመሳሪያው
ተመክቶ ቅድስት አገራችንን ወረራት። ንጉሳችንም ተሰደዱ። አዲስ አበባ
ተቃጠለች ተበዘበዘች። አብያተ ክርስቲያናት ረከሱ በጦሩም ተቃጠሉ።

[Encouraged by its advanced weapons, our enemy, Italy, that has been lurking for a long time invaded Ethiopia. Our king is exiled. Addis Ababa is burnt and looted. Churches are defiled and bombarded.]

Consequently, the character narrator agitates the people for guerrilla war using, the phrase “ምንም እንክዋን ጦራችን ቢፈታና ንጉሳችንም ካገር ቢሰደዱ” (“*minim inqu^wan t’oračün bifätana nīgusačiniim kagär bisädädu*”) [Though our army is defeated and the king is exiled] (*Ariäya*, 1968: 285). The word “ተሰደዱ” (“*täsädädu*”) [exiled] indicates that the Emperor was forced to leave the country beyond his will, for political reason and the defeat of the Ethiopian army. This is an indication that the Emperor’s journey was not done with the consent of the parliament, as some historians like Berihun (2000) and novelists like Woldegiorgis (1969) would like to put it.

Like *Ariaya, Baša Qit'aw* (1983: 122 - 29) only gives little space to the exile of Haileselassie. The issue is raised in the dialogue made between the characters, Basha Kitaw, Begashaw and Olana, during the visit that the first two persons pay to the third one on their way to Addis Ababa from the war front. The two men intended to meet Olana to ask information about the city. In the middle of their dialogue, Olana tells them about the exile of Haileselassie. The dialogue is read as follows (1983: 123-124):

“ከተማው ውስጥ ሥርዓት ጠፍቷል!” አለ ባሻ ቅጣው
 “ የምን ሥርዓት? ጃንሆይ አገር ለቅቀው ከወጡ በኋላ...”
 ባሻ ቅጣው ደንገጥ ብሎ “አገር ለቅቀው ከወጡ በኋላ” ሲል አቋረጣቸው።
 “መጀመሪያ ነገር መች ተመለሱ?” አለ በጋሻው በበኩሉ።
 “ፈረ አልሰማችሁም!”
 “ገና መድረሳችን እኮ ነው አብዬ አላና።” . . .
 “እሳቸውማ የተመለሱት ከጥቂት ቀናት በፊት ነበር... እና የሚያማክሩትን አማክረው የሚፈጽሙትን ፈጽመው በባቡር ተሳፍረው ሹልክ አሉ።”
 “ወደውጭ አገር ለመሄድ”
 “አዎ”
 “እንዴት ተደርጎ”
 “እኔ ምን አውቃለሁ ባሻ! የሰማሁትን ነው የምነግራችሁ።”
 “በጅ...!”
 “እና አሁን እንዳልሁት የሚያማክሩትን አማክረው የሚፈጽሙትን ፈጽመው ሲያበቁ ከትናንት ወዲያ ጨለማ ለብሰው በሐረርጌ ባቡር ሄዱ አሉ...”

[“There is no law and order in the city” said Basha Kitaw.
 “What kind of law and order, once the Emperor left the country...?”
 Basha Kitaw interrupted him shocked with the news about the king, and said,
 “Once the Emperor left the country?”
 “When did the Emperor return after all?” Said, Begashaw.
 “Oh! Haven’t you all heard about it?”
 “Oh Father Olana, We just arrived now” . . .
 “The Emperor returned to Addis Ababa few days before... and went abroad secretly by train after he had done what he had to do, and had consulted his officials.”
 “Did he go abroad?”
 “Yes.”
 “How did it happen?”
 “Oh Basha, I don’t know about it. I am telling you what I have heard.”
 “I see! ...”
 “As I said now, the king went abroad by train, in the dark, the day before yesterday, after he had done what he had to do and had made a consultation with his officials.”]

The two characters were shocked for a moment by the news they heard about the Emperor. The dialogue does not tell the reason for the exile of the Emperor; and was

shocking news for the characters, and that is why Basha Kitaw exclaimed “እንዴት ተደርጎ” (“indet tädäriḡo”) meaning (literally) “how could this happen?” Similarly, when Olana tells the exile of Haileselassie to Basha Kitaw the latter says, “እገር ለቀው ከወጡ በኋላ” (“agar läqäw käwät’u bähuwala”), an equivalent phrase to the word “ተሰደዱ” (“täsäädädu”) [exiled]. The phrase “ለቆ ወጣ” (“läqo wät’a”) [left for] like “ተሰደዱ” (“täsäädädu”), denotes that the Emperor left the country, perhaps without his will and for good.

When Olana said “ሾለኩ አሉ” (“šoläku alu”) which literally means he “went secretly” in reference to the departure of the king, it is an indication that the journey was not made public, perhaps for security reasons or for fear of being watched running away from the enemy and from his people. In any case, all these words and phrases portray the Emperor negatively; it is his escape rather than diplomatic mission that is emphasized. Regarding this issue, the introduction of the autobiographical book of Teklehawariyat states that Tekehawariyat and some other people condemned the exile and regarded the Emperor as responsible for the problems that the Ethiopian people could face (2007: xxvi, xxx).

As could be understood from the discussion made so far, the novel, *Baša Qit’aw*, does not represent the exile of Haileselassie positively. The protagonist character, Basha Kitaw, considers it as a shameful practice that has never happened in the history of Ethiopian politics. By making reference to the experiences of the historical figures, like Emperor Tewodros who preferred to commit suicide rather than surrender to British forces at the battle of Mekdella, and Emperor Yohannes, who died in the battle while fighting courageously with the Mahadists, the character condemns Haileselassie for the act of “cowardice” (1983: 129):

ወደ ኢየሩሳሌም ከሄዱ በግዞት ለመኖር እንጂ ሌላ ለምን ሊሆን ይችላል?
በአገራችን ታሪክ ውስጥ እንዲህ ያለ ነገር ታይቶም ተሰምቶም
አይታወቅም። ታሪካችን እንደሚያረጋግጠው የኢትዮጵያን መሪ
የሚያሸንፈው ሞት ብቻ ነው። አጼ ቴዎድሮስ ጥይት ጠጥተው ሞቱ -
በጠላት ከተሸነፉ በኋላ። አጼ ዮሃንስ ጦር ሜዳ ላይ ወደቁ - ከድርቡሾች
ጋር ሲፋለሙ ሳሉ። ሌሎችም እንዲሁ እስኪሸነፉ ወይም እስኪያሸንፉ ድረስ
ከመታገል በስተቀር በሕይወታቸው እያሉ የመሸነፍን ውርደት ተቀበሉ
ሲባል ሰምተን አናውቅም።

[Why does the Emperor go to Jerusalem unless he wants to leave confined in Jerusalem? This is very strange; such an act has not ever been heard and seen in the history of Ethiopians. History proves that an Ethiopian leader is defeated only in death. Emperor Tewodros shot himself when he lost the war. Emperor Yohannes died while fighting the Derbushes. We have never heard of leaders who accept defeat alive– they would rather fight until the last moment.]

The literary techniques used in *Baša Qit'aw* to reflect this politics are dialogue and historical allusions. The dialogue is conducted between two characters that returned from the war front. They have different conceptions regarding the war. The character, Gidey, thinks that once the Ethiopian army is defeated in the war and Haileselassie is exiled, the war is over; and Italy is in control of the whole country and governs Ethiopia. But the other character, Basha Kitaw, thinks that the war is not over; patriots should continue to fight in guerrilla war, and he was ready to join it. Meanwhile, in discussing the rumor about the exile of Haileselassie, Basha Kitaw said that it was an act of cowardice. Therefore, by alluding to historical heroes, and bringing into forth two opposite thoughts regarding the war, the author expressed his feeling through the dialogue of the characters, and the foregoing words and phrases. No further reflection or explanation is given about Haileselassie's exile, or whether consent was reached on his exile, or the diplomatic effort that he made at the League of Nations.

The author further makes allusions to Adwa and Menelik II in the first two chapters of the novel. This reference to the victory of Adwa in the novel seems to have dual purposes. The first purpose is to show that this battle was a revenge made by Italy for its defeat at the battle of Adwa; the second is to make contrast between Emperor Menelik II, who got a surprising victory over the Italians at the battle of Adwa, and Haileselassie who was defeated and run away without showing much effort to defend the country and the people. This reference and comparison also shows the power of words in revealing political sentiments of the author.

In contrast to *Baša Qit'aw*, *Ariaya* does not explicitly condemn the exile of Haileselassie. It rather expresses its criticism, as previously explained, by subtly using reports, commentaries and dialogues of the narrator such as: “Even if people wage war to defend the Italians, they could not be successful since there is no “ጠቅላይ ሙሪ” (‘täqlay märi’) [central commander], who could coordinate them” (1968: 272 –

273¹⁷)(emphasis mine). Araya states that the people made the leaders responsible for the defeat and were disappointed for the lack of a “**ጠቅላይ መሪ**” (‘täqlay märi’) [central commander] perhaps the Emperor.

The character, Araya, however, believed firmly that the Ethiopian army should not have fought the modern Italian Army in a conventional war. The Emperor also should not have gone to the war fronts in person to fight. What he had to do was to organize the people for guerrilla war and encourage them in all their activities, as is read below (1968: 285):

በውነቱ እኔ እንደሚመስለኝ ጃንሆይ ራሳቸው የጦር አዝማች ሆነው ከሚዘምቱና በሰልፍ ጦርነት ከሚያደርጉ በያገሩ ያለውን ሕዝባቸውን እየተዘዋወሩ እየጎበኙ “አይዞቦ” በማለትና መሣሪያና ሥንቅ በማደል የጎበዝ አለቃ በመሾምና ለገዢዎቹ ለጅብዱዎቹ ሽልማትና ክብር እየሰጡ ቢያበረታቱ የኢትዮጵያ ሕዝብ ከጥቂት ወራት በኋላ በሙሉ አርበኛ ሆኖ ጠላትን አዋክቦ መግቢያና መድረሻ እንደሚያሳጣው አይጠረጠርም ነበር። ጦርነቱንም ህዝቡም ወታደሩም እያደር እየለመደው አዲስ ዘዴ እየተፈጠረ የበለጠ ይበረታ ነበር። አሁንም ምንም እንኳን ጦራችን ቢፈታና ንጉሠ ነገሥታችንም ካገር ቢሰደዱ እዚህ የቀረነው ከጦርነቱ እልቂት የዳነው ሁሉ በያለንበት የፋኖ ጦርነት ማድረግና እስከመጨረሻው ጠላታችንን ማዋከብ ነው። በዚህ አኳኋን ብቻ ጠላታችንን ለማድከምና የኋላ ድል ለማግኘት ተስፋ እናገኛለን። አለዚያ ግን የሳት እራት መሆን ነው እንጂ የሚጠቅም ሥራ ለመሥራት አንችልም።

[In my opinion, if the Emperor had focused on visiting and encouraging his people in different parts of the country, providing them with arms and rations, and appointing and rewarding local leaders and heroes, rather than directly facing the Italian army in a conventional war, every Ethiopian would engage in guerrilla warfare, put the enemy in disarray, and deny them outlet in a few months time. Through experience, the people and the army would become stronger and learn new strategies. But still, even though our army is dispersed and our Emperor is in exile, the rest of us who are here should wage guerrilla war and trouble the enemy. It is only in this way that we can weaken the enemy and ultimately beat our enemy. Otherwise, we will fall victims to enemy forces.]

The character narrator, as a representative of the father of the author, likely reflects the position of his father, Teklehawariyat, regarding the exile. Teklehawariyat had a belief that the Ethiopian army should not use the conventional war since there were imbalances in technology between the Ethiopians and the Italians. He rather

¹⁷see the second quotation, the Amharic extract, in 3.2.2.3..

recommended that Ethiopians fight a guerrilla war (Teklehawariyat, 2007: XXV). This is similar to Araya's view that it was better for the Emperor to supply guns and rations to the people and patriots so that the people in turn could begin to fight the enemy.

Therefore, taking into consideration the positions held by Teklehawariyat and Araya, and the commentaries that the narrator makes, it could be said that the novel, *Ariaya*, is a critique of the exile of Hailesilassie. The calm tones of the narrator and the character have contributed to making a subtle criticism. If the narrator or the character narrator had used bitter and hesitant tone, the destiny of the author and the novel would have been different.

With regard to the issue of “divide and rule policy”, that the Italians used to disunite the Ethiopian people and weaken their struggle, the Italians made agitations on the basis of ethnicity, religion and class: Muslims against Christians, different ethnic groups against the Amharas, the ruled against the rulers and the lords. Such deeds of the Italians are clearly stated in the novels, *Ariaya* (1968: 296, 300) and *Baša Qit'aw* (1983: 178-179). For instance, the first extract below is taken from a letter sent from an unknown patriot to fellow patriots (1968: 296), while the second is taken from the dialogue made between Basha Woldemariyam and Araya (1968: 300):

ባዶሊዮ ከሄደ ወዲህ ግራዚያኒ የሚባል ተሹሞ እሱም ሕዝቡን ለመለያየትና ለማታለል ሲል እስላሞችን በጣም አስጠግቶ አማራን ጠልቷል (296)።

[After Badolio left, a man named, Graziani, was appointed; and in order to divide and cheat the people, Graziani sided with Muslims and saw the Amharas in animosity.]

መንግሥቱ ለመላው ኢትዮጵያ ቢሆንና በአውነት የወገን መለያየት ፖሊቲካ በሽዋ መንግስት ዘመን ይልቁንም በቀዳማዊ ኃይለሥላሴ የቀረ ቢሆንም ሥልጣኑ ሁሉ የሸዎች እንደነበረና ሌላው ሁሉ ተጨቁኖ እንደኖረ አይነት እያስመሰሉ ጣሊያኖች መስበካቸውና ማስመሰላቸው አይቀርም።

እኛ አማሮች የተባልነው ከገደላችንና ከተራራችን የተሰደድን በዙሪያችን ያሉትን የጥንት ሰፊ አገሮቻችንን ስናቀና ሕዝቡን ያለብዙ ድካም ለማስተዳደር ቢቻለን እንኳ ቀድሞ ባበቶቻችን ገባርና ባሪያ እየተባሉ ይዝቱ የነበሩት ሕዝቦች ዛሬ እኛ በተራችን ስንጠቃ ሲያዩን የጠላትን ስብከት በማድመጥ ለመበቀል ከመሞከራቸው ይልቅ ጠላትን እንደ ወገናቸው አይተው ያስጠጉት ይሆናል ስለዚህ በየዳር አገር ያለው አማራ ባሁኑ ሰዓት ያለበት ጭንቅ ጉልህ ነው (300)።

[Although ethnicity has been resolved during the Shawa dynasty, especially during the period of Haileselassie, and the government stood for all Ethiopians, the Italians will not refrain from propagating that the power was in the hands of the Shawa people, and the other ethnic groups were undermined.

We the Amharas descended from our valleys and mountains to reclaim our ancient land in our surrounding, and were able to effectively administer the people. At this time, it is obvious that the Amharas living around the land are troubled that those people who were labelled as tenants and slaves and were ruled by our forefathers will revenge them or take sides with the enemy, once they see that the Amharas, in trun, are defeated.]

Like *Ariaya*, *Baša Qit'aw* also raises a problem related to “divide and rule” policy. For instance, Abate, one of the elite characters and a secret member of patriots tells the wife of his friend that the reason for the death of his father was Molla, a servant of Abate’s father, because Molla was bribed by the Italians (1983: 179). The representation of the issue of “divide and rule” policy of Italy is real, as can be proved in the historical research work done by Bahru (2002a: 167). The representation of ‘divide and rule’ is explicit, though only a little space is dedicated to it in the novel. All Ethiopians have been affected by the “divide and rule” policy. However, the most targeted groups were the Amhara people. The Amhara people also largely felt that they were freedom fighters and promoters of nationality and development. This might have foregrounded the concealed relationships that had existed among the Amharas and other ethnic groups of Ethiopian.

It is also reported in the novel that Graziani was teasing the Amharas on different occasions. The case of Yekatit 12 (February 19, 1937), the massacre of the people of Addis Ababa by the Italians, after Abraha Daboch and Moges Asgadam threw grenades to kill General Graziani is one of such important occasions that reflected Graziani’s views in the novel, *Ariaya*. The General was threatening the patriots and the Amhara people who were gathered to mark an occasion (1968: 306):

የካቲት 12 ቀን አርብ ጧት የሚካሄድ ቀን ክብር ይደረጋል ብለው የከተማውን ሕዝብ በላይኛው ጊቢ አደባባይ በጧት ሰብስበው ግራዚያኒ በመካከል ቆሞ ባርበኞች ሲዝትና ባማሮች ሲያፈግ የመጣበት ሳይታወቅ ሦሙን ተጣለበት፤ በዚያ ጊዜ ባፍ ጢሙ ከመሬት ሲደፋ በዙሪያው የነበሩት ባለሟሎችና የጦር አለቆች መድረሻ አጥተው ሰሯሯው ሦሙንም እየተከታተለ ሲፈነዳ ብዙ ሰው ከጣሊያንና ከአበሻ እየተመታ ወደቀ።

ጣሊያኖች ግን ድንጋጤያቸውና ብርካቸው ሲያልፍ አስተጋብተው በግቢው አደባባይ ይተራመስ በነበረው ህዝብ ላይ የመትረየስ ተኩስ አዘነሙብት፡፡

[On Friday, February 19, while Graziani was threatening the patriots and teasing the Amharas, who were invited by the Italians to perform a religious ceremony in the palace, grenades were thrown at the former. Graziani fell flat on his face on the ground and his lower officials ran away from the area. Grenades exploded repeatedly and many people died from among the Italians and the Ethiopians. But when the Italians came to their consciousness they began to shoot the people with machine guns.]

This event of the massacre is described in Bahru as (2002a: 170):

On 19 February 1937, Italian Fascism showed its darkest face. Following the unsuccessful attempt on the life of Graziani by two young Ethiopians, Abrha Daboch and Mogas Asgadam, a reign of terror was unleashed in Addis Ababa. With official backing, the Black shirts, the political zealots of the fascist order, went berserk in the city, chopping off heads, burning down houses with their inhabitants, disembowelling pregnant women and committing all manner of atrocities. The educated Ethiopians were particularly targeted for liquidation...

The representation of the event of the massacre in the novel is credible and overt; however, it is not presented in detail. The day of the massacre is remembered in Ethiopia every year since the liberation. Although the Amharas allegedly felt that they were the sole patriots, and the Italians targeted to detach the Amharas from other ethnic groups, it was two Eritreans (Bairu, 2005: 57; Sarbo, 2009: 130) that attempted to kill General Graziani. In the end, the targets of the Italians were all the ethnic groups in Addis Ababa, especially the elites. Anyway, the situation appears to reveal a sense of superiority complex that the Amharas arguably had against the other ethnic groups.

Regarding the “struggle of the patriots”, both novels, *Ariaya* and *Baša Qit’aw* give more emphasis to guerrilla war than the conventional war. *Ariaya*, in particular centers its narration on the central character, Araya, and narrates the struggle of the patriots in more than 11 chapters. More focus is given to the guerilla war than the diplomatic struggle of Haileselassie. Likewise, *Baša Qit’aw* gives focus to patriots centring its narration on the central character, Basha Kitaw.

In both novels, the central hero characters, Araya and Basha Kitaw, are returned from the wars in the northern fronts and are dissatisfied with the exile of Haieselassie. Both

characters preferred to continue guerrilla war rather than surrender. Hence, they take initiative to organize people and launch different guerrilla attacks on the enemy. Although most of the main characters are fictional, and the settings are not set in different parts of the country where patriots conducted wars, the guerrilla warfare made in Shawa and other northern regions are represented in the novels in a detailed and plausible manner.

The fact that focus is given to the guerrilla war conducted by patriots rather than the conventional war led by the Emperor, the warlords and the diplomatic effort have political implication in that the patriots are given more credit in the restoration of freedom, than the Emperor and his diplomatic effort. And the imbalance that is shown in representing the issues can be considered as a technique of subtle representation of the truth and political affiliations of the authors. The technique shows the positive attitude of the authors towards the patriots, and their negative feelings to the exile of Haileselassie and the diplomatic war victory that the Emperor claimed. As previously discussed, since *Baša Qit'aw* was written and published after the fall of the Haileselassie's government, the writer seems to have been free to write the truth in such a fashion. It was problematic to do this in *Ariaya*, because it was written and published during the period of Haileselassie. To avoid such difficulty the author appears to have written the novel satirically in that it seems to support the Emperor overtly, but criticizes him covertly.

3.2.2.4. Victory and the Restoration of Freedom

In this last phase, the alignment of Italy with Germany in the Second World War, the military support of Britain to Ethiopia, and the freedom and restoration of the throne are discussed as reflected in the novels. Of course *Baša Qit'aw* does not entertain the reception made to the king, perhaps for the novelist does not accept the claim that the Emperor was victorious in the war and diplomatic fields. But in *Ariaya* one comes across a celebration related to the welcoming of Haileselassie.

Both novels narrate the alignment of Italy with Hitler as a factor that changed the course of the Italian occupation in Ethiopia. The situation is described by *Ariaya* (1968: 334) and *Baša Qit'aw* (1983: 212) as an opportunity to Ethiopia. In *Ariaya* the event is reflected by means of a letter sent from a secret patriot to Araya and his comrades (1968: 334):

ባውሮፓ የፖለቲካ አካሄድ እየተበላሸ ወደ ጦርነት በጣም በመጠጋቱ ወደ ጠብ መድረሳቸው ተረጋግጧል። አውሮፓ ለሁለት ተከፍሎ ከዛሬ ነገ ጦርነት ይጠብቃል። ባንድ ፊት ጀርመንና ኢጣሊያ በሌላው ደግሞ እንግልጣርና ፈረንሳይ ከነወገኖቻቸው ተሰልፈዋል።

ጦርነቱ ሲነሳ እንጊሊዝ ጣሊያንን ለመውጋት እኛን መርዳቱና ጃንሆይም መምጣታቸው አይቀርም። በኬንያና በበርበራ በሱዳን ብዙ ሺህ የኢትዮጵያ ስደተኞች ተጠራቅመው ለመዝመት ይዘጋጃሉ ይባላል። አይዚችሁ እንግዲህ መጨረሻው ደርሳችኋል።

[The political situation of Europe is in problem; it has been proven that they are not in good terms with each other. Europe is already divided into two camps and is ready to start a war. On one side there are Germany and Italy while on another England and France are grouped.]

When the war starts, Britain might assist Ethiopia with the purpose of fighting the Italians. The Emperor might come home from exile. There is a rumor that many migrants that have been gathered in Kenya, Berbara and Sudan are ready to fight the Italians. Be courageous! You are now approaching the end of the war.]

Like *Ariaya*, *Baša Qit'aw* represents the event through a letter sent from secret patriots who spy for Basha Kitaw and his colleague patriots. Both novels considered the case as an advantage that could lead to end the Italian occupation of Ethiopia. The novel, *Baša Qit'aw*, states (1983: 213 – 214):

እስካሁን ድረስ በኒቶ ሙሶሊኒ በአውሮጳ ውዝግብ ጣልያ ሳይገባ ከዳር ሆኖ ሲያስተውል ነበር። አሁን ግን ሂትለር ፈረንሳይን በጦር ሃይል ወግቶ ለማንበርከክ መነሳቱንና ይፆንንም ለማድረግ በቂ ኃይል እንዳለው በመገንዘብ የማይቀረው የሂትለር ድል የሱም ድል እንዲሆንለት በመመኘት ከሂትለር ጋር አብሯል። እንጊሊዝ በዚህ ድርጊት በጣም ተከፍታለች። ሂትለርና ሙሶሊኒ አንድ ላይ ሆነው ፈረንሳይን ከደቆሱ በኋላ ራሷ የፋሺስትና የናዚ ጥቃት እንደማይቀርላት በመገንዘብ በጣም ሠግታለች ተናድዳለች

ይህ ሁኔታ ለኢትዮጵያ አንድ የተስፋ ጭላንጭል ለማሳየት በቅቷል። ኢትዮጵያና እንጊሊዝ በምስራቅ አፍሪካ የጋራ ጦርነት ለመክፈት ከስምምነት ደርሰዋል ይባላል። የስምምነቱ ዝርዝር ሁኔታም ባይገለጽም ሁለቱ አገሮች በመተባበር ጣሊያንን ለመውጋት ከስምምነት መድረሳቸው ተረጋግጧል። በአውሮፓና በመሀከለኛው ምስራቅ የሚገኙ ስደተኞች በቅርብ ጊዜ ውስጥ ወደ ሱዳን እንደሚያመሩ ይነገራል።

[Till now Benito Mussolini had taken a neutral position in the European politics. But now he has made an alliance with Hitler knowing that the latter is powerful enough to conquer France so that he can enjoy victory with him. England was angry and disappointed about the action, because it realized that after defeating France, Hitler and Mussolini will make it their next target.]

This situation gave Ethiopia a glimmer of hope. It was rumoured that Ethiopia and England have reached agreement to cooperate in war in East Africa. Although the details of the agreement are not disclosed, it has been proved that the two countries have agreed to fight Italy. It is also told that Ethiopians who had migrated to Europe and the Middle East countries will go to Sudan soon.]

The representations of the political events related to the alignment of Italy with German in the Second World War, and the military assistance of Britain to Ethiopia, in the novels are credible and explicit. This is largely similar to the description stated in Bahru: (2002a: 176):

The Resistance entered its last and decisive stage with the internationalization of the conflict. In early June 1940, Mussolini made the biggest miscalculation of his career: he entered World War Two on the side of Germany. With that, he recklessly brought to an end the Anglo - French connivance that had made his conquest of Ethiopia possible in the first place. In the eyes of the British, he was transformed from a histrionic buffoon into a demon poised to attack their East African colonies. Italy's most steadfast ally from the 1890s onwards now became a mortal enemy. Correspondingly Hayla-Sellassie's political position underwent a dramatic change. As the symbol uniting all Ethiopians against the enemy, he was transported from his state of exile to the theatre of war.

The exile of the Emperor, his return to the country and his re-ascending to the throne are reflected in the novels in different ways. *Agazi* reflects the situation positively but not exhaustively. According to the character narrator of the novel, the Emperor went to Europe to appeal to the League of Nations and was able to win the diplomatic struggle and to free the country with the help of the British. Conversely, *Baša Qit'aw* gives no space to the diplomatic effort, the return of the Emperor, and the welcoming ceremony given to him. The narrator of the novel rather states that the patriots and the people of Ethiopia celebrated the victory day. There is no mention of the name of the Emperor and the reception. The reason for ignoring this issue is perhaps that the author is against the exile of the Emperor.

Since the novel was written in the post Haileselassie period, the author of *Baša Qit'aw* could have criticized Haileselassie instead of ignoring the event, or could have condemned the act explicitly, if he had believed that Haileselassie did not contribute to the diplomatic struggle for the freedom of the country. Nonetheless, he chose to be silent. The reason might be that the author might have preferred to give no space to

criticizing the Emperor overtly in the novel; or, he might not have wanted to be an instrument of the Darg government that needed such writings that focused on the weak sides of Haileselassie, for propaganda purpose. Therefore, he preferred to show his objection by ignoring the event, while other loyalist writers like Woldegiorgis appreciated the exile (This situation of neglect is also true for other post revolution novels like *Adabay* by Tilahun, and *Nät'sanät*, by Zenaneh). Therefore, within the framework of the novel, un-representation of key political figures and events, or giving little or no attention to important political events is a technique which shows the authors' position towards the role of the Emperor in the Maychew politics. In relation to 'unrepresentation' (or absence of representation, in Fairclough's terms) of events or idea in discourses, Fairclough states, "Textual analysis can often give excellent insights about what is in a text, but what is absent from a text is often just as significant from the perspective of socio cultural analysis" (1995: 5). Thus, analyzing what is absent in texts likely gives information about the ideology of texts or authors. Fairclough further explains the value of explicit and implicit representations and under and over representations in discourses in the following way (1995: 5-6):

The distinction between what is explicit and what is implicit in a text is of considerable importance in socio cultural analysis. Analysis of implicit content can provide valuable insights into what is taken as given, as common sense. It also gives a way into ideological analysis of texts, for ideologies are generally implicit assumptions.

Hence the absences, the explicit and implicit representations, and under representations that existed in the novels under discussion have ideological functions, as previously discussed.

Eventhough the novel, *Ariaya*, is dedicated to the independence day, Miazia 27 (May 5), the day that Hailesellasie arrived in Addis Ababa and re-gained the throne, the author does not seem to have been interested in representing in detail the diplomatic effort and the battle that Haileselassie is claimed to have made in his return via Gojam to Addis Ababa. In other words he under-represented the events. If the author had been really a loyalist to the Emperor, he would have given enough space for the so-called diplomatic effort and the battle because he is believed to have information, as he was an official in Haileselassie's government. But the author preferred to under-represent the events rather than write in detail. Perhaps, one of the reasons for the

under- representation of these events by the novelist, is either fear of censorship, or lack of interest in the diplomatic effort of the Emperor.

Unlike *Ariaya* and *Baša Qit'aw*, *Agazi* does not give account of some of the aforementioned political events. Although, the novel seems to narrate the political events in the order of their occurrences, in actual fact he does not represent them chronologically and exhaustively. In other words, there are a lot of temporal distortions in it. The reason for this is the fact that the character narrator of the novel does not have a tangible story to tell his readers, because he has no direct experience as he was on a study leave during the war; nor does he have reliable sources that enrich or update his knowledge of the war. Because of this, he jumps here and there; he tells his worries, ambitions, day and night dreams. The sources for his information are 'personified Ethiopia' and different saints that revealed things to him in his day dreams. Ethiopia is represented as female, and St. George and St. David are revealed to him in his day- dreams since he always worries about the war and the country (*Agazi*, 1969).

The novel, *Agazi*, seems to be in favour of the Emperor. Apparently, no criticism is made against him; rather, he is praised by the character narrator in every activity reflected in the novel. What is more surprising is that Haileselassie is compared to God in different situations as it is observed in the quotation, “kullo hadäginä wätälonakä”, (we left all and followed you) (1969: 62) alluded to the Bible, Luke, 5, 11: “and when they had brought their ships to land, they forsook all, and followed him”. Like the disciples followed Jesus, his loyal people followed him (Haileselassie):

አንበሳችን በግርማ ተመለሰ። ታማኞቹም “ኩሎ ኃደግነ ወተሎናክ” ሲሉ ሓዋሪያት ክርስቶስን እንደተከተሉት ተከተሉት። ኩሎቹም ካንተ ከተለየን ዓለም ለምናችን እያሉ ከመንደር ወደ ዱር ተሰደዱ። የቀሩትም በውስጣዊ ስሜታቸው ማቅ ለብሰው አመድ ነስንሰው በሀዘን ተጠመዱ። ስለዚህ ነው እንደገና ድል አድራጊነቱን ያወቅሁት።

[Our lion has returned with all the charisma. His loyalists followed him, as the disciples followed Jesus saying “we left everything, and followed you”. All of them left their villages and went to the forest saying that the world was nothing in his absence. The rest felt sad and deeply hurt. It is for this reason that I realized his victory. (1969: 62).]

Following the style of the Psalms 131:1 (of the Geez version), that is read as “**ተዘከሮ እግዚአ ለዳዊት ወለኩሉ የውሃቱ**” (“täzäkäro igziio lädawit wäläkulu yäwihatu”) [Lord, remember David, and all his afflictions], the novel states: “**ተዘከሮ እግዚአ ለዳዊት (ለኃይለስላሴ) ወለኩሉ የውሃቱ**” (“täzäkäro igziio lädawit (lähayiläsilasse) wäläkulu yäwihatu”) [Lord, remember David (Haileselassie) and all his afflictions] (1969: 76). The narrator puts the name, ‘Haileselassie’, in bracket perhaps to equate Haileselassie to David.

On a different page of the novel, Haileselassie is described as “lion” and “cub” (1969: 62, 64) as David is described in the Bible, in both the Old and the New Testaments. The following quotation is from the novel, *Agazi* (1969: 92):

በያዕቆብ ቃል አንበሳ ዕንሊ አንበሳ ተብሎ ከተሰየመ በኋላ እደክ ዲበ ዘባኖ ለጸርክ ተብሎ የተመረቀና አሸናፊነቱ የተመሰከረለት የይሁዳ አንበሳ 1932 ዓ.ም. በሰኔ ወር ወደ ካርቱም ሄዶ ጣህሩን ባሰማ ጊዜ ኢትዮጵያ ምታ ነገራት ክተት ሰራዊት ስትል አዋጅ ነገረች።

[After being named a ‘cub’ (using the term that Jacob used to describe David) the lion of Judah (the Emperor) was blessed as one who is superior to his enemies, and when he arrived in Khartoum in June 1940, Ethiopia told its people to beat the “negarit” (drum) and go to the war-front.](The clarification is mine).

The narrator compares Haileselassie to a lion, not only to tell readers that he is a hero but also to show that he is a descendant of David. It is obvious that the official title of the Emperor read, “His Imperial Majesty Haileselassie I, King of Kings, elect of God, Conquering Lion of the tribe of Judah” as written in his seal of government (Berihun, 2000: 147). Haieselassie also wrote that he was a descendant of King Solomon and Queen Sheba (1965: Introduction).

In another context of the novel (1969:75), the Emperor is compared to the Biblical figure, David, while Italy is compared to Goliath (1 Samuel, 17):

ጸላት በብረት ሃይል ቢመጣ አሰፍስፎ ዳዊትን ሆነና የጠቅል ለፎ ጎልያድን ጣለው ድንጋይ አወናጭፎ።

[The enemy came with arms and anticipation; the Emperor’s army won the enemy using stone, like Dawit did against Goliath.]

This means that even though if the enemy came armed with advanced guns, Haileselassie's army won the Italians using traditional weapons. For the narrator of the story, Haileselassie was the only person who fought courageously for Ethiopia. Like Simon carried the cross to Jesus (*Yämäs'haf Qīdus Mäzīgäbä Qalat* (Dictionary of the Bible), 2000: 83; Mar, 15:21), Haileselassie “carried the cross” to Ethiopia (1969: 85):

ከዚያው ከቁርጠኛው ልጅዋ በቀር ለጊዜው ከትከሻዋ ጠጋ ብሎ መስቀሏን
ያስከማትና ያገዛት አንድም ስምኑን የለም፡፡

[There was no other person or Simon, except her committed son, who came near her and made her carry the cross and helped her.]

As it can be understood from the excerpt, the narrator seems to disregard all the efforts of people who fought for the freedom of Ethiopia.

Haileselassie is again described as “God” and “light”. As Jesus Christ resurrected to life after death and saved the world (Acts 1:1-3; Mathew 27: 62-66), Haileselassie also brought Ethiopia to life from her death (1970:70): “የኢትዮጵያ ትንሳኤ ይሆን ዘንድ” (“yāityop’ya tinsae yihonu zänid”) [Haileselassie being a resurrection to Ethiopia]. As Jesus is symbolized as light (Joan, 1: 4-9), Haileselassie is symbolically described in the novel as light by his loyal supporters, who are considered as his disciples as: “መብራታችን አትጥፋብን” (“mäbiratačīn atīt’ifabīn”) [Don’t go off our light] (1969: 70) that literally means “don’t die, our genius leader.”

Haileselassie is also addressed in the novel (1969: 77) exclaiming: “የኃይለስላሴን ፍቅሩን ማን ያስተወናል” (“yāhayläsilassen fiqirun mann yasitāwānal”) [who separates us from the love of Haileselassie] as Jesus is addressed by Paul (Roman, 8: 35): “who shall separate us from the love of Christ?” The Biblical reference is used in the novel with a deliberate intention to regard Haileselassie as God and Holy.

From these and other points expressed in the novel, we could say that *Agazi* was primarily written to show the author’s respect to the Emperor, rather than to reflect the Maychew historical event. The author seems to be very apologist, as one could understand from the evidences given. He portrays the Emperor as “god” or/and a “holy” figure using different biblical referents drawn on his experiences of religious

education (Molvaer, 1997: 35-37). Therefore, we can say that the novel is not a plausible representation of the Maychew event. He could also be described as an apologist writer, perhaps since he was one of the top ministers appointed from non-royalty class during the Haileselassie period (Molvaer, 1997: 35 - 37). He was also one of the members who accompanied the Emperor to Europe. Therefore, we can say that he seems to reflect his loyalty to Haileselassie through this apologist novel. The author's use of biblical languages and references to biblical texts in the novel show the power of words in revealing intentions and ideologies of authors (Fairclough, 1995: 17-18; Wodak, 2002: 11).

Why does *Ariaya* praise Haileselassie and events related to his politics explicitly and why does it criticize the Emperor and his administration implicitly? And why does *Baša Qit'aw* criticize Haileselassie both overtly and covertly? Why does *Agazi* praise Haileselassie overtly? One of the reasons for *Baša Qit'aw* to be courageous enough to criticize the Emperor overtly might be that the novel was published in the post-1974 period, after the fall of the Imperial government, and therefore, censorship did not stop him from publishing the work since the Darg government presumably benefited from it. On the other hand, *Ariaya* reflects the events related to the Emperor implicitly perhaps it was hard to pass censorship since the book was published in the contemporary period of Haileselassie. Conceivably, it was a risk for the writer to criticize the Emperor overtly for he was one of the top officials of the government. Therefore, the author on one side seems to act overtly as an apologist by dedicating the novel to the Emperor, and on the other, he appears to be a critic subtly using tropes.

Ariaya pretends to favor Haileselasse. This overt support is reflected in different ways. The physical outlay of the novel begins with the photograph of Haileselassie and a message addressed to the Emperor in the first two to three pages of the novel (paratext, in Genette's (1997) term). From the photograph and the message, one can infer that the author was loyal to the Emperor. The message states that the novel was dedicated to the day of independence (April 27) in which the Emperor re-gained the throne. Furthermore, as the message addressed to the Emperor, credit for the victory is given to Haileselassie. The brutal struggles of the patriots and the lovers of the

country and the support of the British government are also listed turn by turn, as factors that contributed to the victory, following the contribution of the Emperor:

ግርማዊነትዎ በኢትዮጵያ ዕድልና በእግዚአብሔር ፍርድ ተማምኖ አምስት ዓመት በስደት ባደረገው ትግልና በአርበኞቹ ተጋዳይነት ባገር ደጋፊዎች ብርታትና በማይረሳው በታላቋ ብሪታኒያ እርዳታ በድል አድራጊነት በዙፋኑ ላይ ለተመለሰበት የኢትዮጵያ ነጻነትና ክብር ታድሶ ለተቋቋመበት ዕለት ለሚያዚያ 27 ቀን 1933 ዓ.ም መታሰቢያ እንዲሆንልኝ ከንጉሠ ነገስታዊ ዙፋን ስር ቆሜ አበረክታለሁ፡፡ ...

ቅን አገልጋይዎ

[I stand below your Majesty's Throne to dedicate this novel in commemoration of May 5/ 1941, when the throne was restored and Ethiopian independence and respect was renewed through your five year struggle from exile, the struggle of the patriots and supporters of the country, and the unforgettable support of Great Britain.

Your Loyal Servant]

The author addresses the Emperor in a second person point of view using such phrases like “ለግርማዊ ቀዳማዊ ንጉሰነገስት ዘኢትዮጵያ” (“lägärimawi qädamawi nīgusänägäsīt zäityop’ya”) [Your Majesty Emperor Haileselassie, king of kings of Ethiopia], “ግርማዊ ሆይ” (“girmawi hoy”) [dear Your Majesty]. The letter ends with a phrase, “ቅን አገልጋይዎ” (“qīn agälgayīwo”) [Your faithful servant]. The use of such phrases and the manner of addressing the Emperor disclose that the author seems to be loyal to the Emperor. The language has the potential to express the power relationships (Fairclough, 1995: 1; Blommaert and Bulcaen, 2000: 448) that existed between the author, as an official of the government, and the Emperor.

3.3. Conclusion

The chapter dealt with the pre-war and the Maychew war politics. From the reading and interpretation made on the three novels, it was found that the novels represented political events of the Haileselassie government either as a critiques or supporters. Both *Ariaya* and *Agazi* posted on their front pages the name and the photograph of Emperor Haileselassie, with his years of birth and coronation. They even included the photographs of the empress and the princes. *Ariaya* futhrer dedicated the novel to Haileselassie. *Baša Qit’aw* does not have such things. Such photographs and dedications, which Genette (1997) calls ‘paratext’, are not written or included without purpose. They reveal relationships - intellectual, artistic, political, or other (1997: 131,

135) between the dedicator, usually the author and the dedicatee, as could be observed from the novel, *Ariaya*.

According to Genette, certain periods can be characterized by the use of dedications and posting photographs of public figures, more than others (1997:129). This was a typical characteristic of the period of Haileselassie, because it was customary to post his photograph with captions telling his coronation or/and birth day. This is also a revelation of political relationships between the dedicator (the author), the people, and the king/the ruling class.

All the three novels represented the pre-war and the war periods in retrospect since *Ariaya* and *Agazi* were published in the 1940s, after the restoration of freedom within the Haileselassie era, while *Baša Qit'aw* was published after the decline of the government of Haileselassie. The publication time, among other factors, might have an impact on the manner of the representations of the politics. This might be one of the reasons for *Baša Qit'aw* to critique the Emperor boldly as it was published after the decline of the Imperial regime. In the novel, no dedication was made to the king; no photograph of Haileselassie was posted as paratext¹⁸. This makes it possible to understand the influence of the context and the politics on the literature (Brannigan, 2001: 169, 179).

Agazi represented the politics of the period positively, favoring the Emperor and his political system. It portrayed the emperor as wise leader and regarded the exile as a change of a war strategy. *Ariaya* represented political events that it favoured, for instance, the expansion of education in the pre-war period positively and explicitly, while it implicitly condemned the events such as the exile. Generally, *Ariaya* was more of a critique than an apologist. Unlike the two novels, *Baša Qit'aw* is generally a critique novel.

Both *Agazi* and *Ariaya* favor the politics of the pre-war period. The formation of the centralized government, the constitution, the establishments of schools are referred positively in the novels; however, *Ariaya* further comments on the improvement of the legislation and the need to give democratic rights to the people to elect their own

¹⁸ According to Genette, time is one of the factors that determine the content and manner of dedications. Even Genette has mentioned later deletion and deletion + addition (or substitution) of dedicatee or dedications experienced through time (see Genette, 1997:127 – 128).

administrators, at least, at sub district levels. This also shows the potential role literature and authors play for change (Bertens, 2001: 166-167; Brannigan, 2001: 169-170).

Agazi predicted the unification of Eritrea with Ethiopia some years before the actual event, while *Ariaya* suggested the need for participation of the society in electing their administrators, and maintaining the right of the people to share the resources of the country.

With regard to their writing styles, *Agazi* and *Ariaya*, especially the former use biblical allusion to show the respect the author has towards the Emperor. The language use in *Agazi* also witnesses the experience (*habitus*, in Bourdieus term (see sub chapter 2.1.5.2.) of the author in church and traditional education as well as his knowledge of the Geez language.

Chapter Four

Analyses and Interpretations of Representations of Political Events of the Post-war Period (1941-1974).in Selected Amharic Novels

4.1. Introduction

In the preceding section, the pre-war and the war politics of Ethiopia were presented. This chapter deals with the post-war politics (see the detail in chapter 2.2.2.1.3 - 2.2.2.1.6.). The chapter has two parts: the discussion and conclusion.

4.2. Discussion

This section has two parts. The first part deals with the analyses and interpretations of the representations of the politics and the hopes and progresses of the people and the country observed soon after the restoration of independence. The second part deals with the analyses and interpretations of representations in the novels, with regard to the failures to meet the hopes and progresses of the people and the country. More specifically, representations related to class composition of the society, the production relationships, inequalities between different ethnic groups, slavery, the relationship between religion and the state, the movements and oppositions of the people, the coups and other factors that led to the 1974 revolution as depicted in the Amharic novels are analyzed and interpreted. In addition to the novels discussed in the last chapter (*Agazi*, *Ariaya* and *Baša Qit'aw*), the novels selected for the discussions of the post-war political events are *Aliwälädim* (1963), *Adäfris* (1970), *Maibäl Yabiyot Wazema* (1979) and *Filmiya* (2009). Among these novels, the last two are post contemporaneous novels, as they have been published after the fall of the Haileselassie government. *Baša Qit'aw* is discussed only in some instances for it mainly deals with the Maychew war.

4.2.1. The politics of Hope and progress after the Restoration of Freedom.

The restoration of freedom after the courageous struggle made by the patriots ignited a new spirit among the Ethiopian people. The people hoped that the progress and civilization that had been witnessed in the pre-war period would continue after the restoration of freedom. As previously explained, in the pre-war period of Haileselassie, the first constitution was set; some schools were also founded in big towns like Addis Ababa and Dire Dawa. Moreover, efforts were made to form a

stronger central government; even different ministries led by some non-royalist elites were established (Bahru, 2002a: 109, 137-145 & 2002b; Marcus, 1994: 130-134). Once freedom was restored, the people of Ethiopia expected further development and progress in the country. In response to the expectations of the people, the Emperor made an earnest request to the people to work in a new spirit for the development of the country. He promised to work for prosperity, equality, and freedom for the new Ethiopia (Marcus, 2003: 19). He urged the need for unity and promised to launch a modern administrative system in the country. These points are reflected in the novel, *Ariaya*, through a reference to the speech that the Emperor delivered on freedom-day, as represented in “Sänidäq Alamačän” gazette, no 17 (1968: 341 - 348, Berihun, 2000: 252 - 256)). The following are the extracts from the novel (1968: 341 - 348):

ከማናቸውም አስቀድሞ ለሁላችሁ ልነግራችሁና ልትረዱት የምፈልገው ይህ ቀን ላዲሲቱ ኢትዮጵያ ያዲስ ታሪክ ዘመን መክፈቻ መሆኑን ነው። ባዲስ ዘመን ሁላችን መፈጸም ያለብን አዲስ ስራ ይዠመራል (ገጽ 341)።

ባለፉት አምስት ዓመታት ውስጥ በዝርዝር ተነግረውና ተቆጥረው የማያልቁ ያገኘናቸው መከራና ሥቃይ ትምህርት ሆነውን ሠራተኞች አንድነት ሀብረትና ፍቅር በልባችሁ ተጽፈው ለምናስበው ለኢትዮጵያ ጉዳይ ረዳቶች ለመሆን ዋና ትምህርት የሚሰጣችሁ ነው። ባዲሲቷ ኢትዮጵያ ከእንጂይህ ወዲያ የማትነጣጠሉ በህግ ፊት ትክክልነትና ነጻነት ያላችሁ ህዝቦች እንድትሆኑ እንፈልጋለን።

አገር የሚለማበትን ሕዝብ የሚበለጽግበትን እርሻ ንግድ ትምህርትና ጥበብ የሚሰፋበትን የህዝባችን ህይወቱና ሀብቱ የሚጠበቅበትን ያገር አስተዳደር ባዲሱ ሥልጣኔ ተለውጦ ፍጹም የሚሆንበትን ይህን ለመሰለው ለምንደክምበት ሥራ አብሮ ደካሚ መሆን አለባችሁ (ገጽ 346)

ሁላችንም ባገራችን ኢትዮጵያ ውስጥ ሃይማኖትን የሚያስከብርና የሚጠብቅ መንግስት በማቋቋም የህዝብንና የህሊናን ነጻነት በመፍቀድ ለሕዝብና ላገር የሚጥም ሥራ መሥራት ብርቱ ምኞታችንና ሃሳባችን ነው (ገጽ 347)

ኢትዮጵያ ጥቅምት 1 ቀን 1928 ዓ.ም. የዠመረችውን ትግል ከብዙ ድካም ከብዙ ሥቃይ ከብዙ ምጽዋት ከብዙ ፈተና በኋላ አምስት አመት ታግላ ጠላቷን ድል አድርጋ ነጻነቷን መለሰች የቀድሞ መልኳ ተለውጦ አዲስ ልብስ ለብሳ ቁስሏን እያሳሳረች ባዲስ እርምጃ ለመራመድ ስትቃጣ ትታያለች፤ ... ኢትዮጵያ ታበጽህ እደዊሃ ኃበ እግዚአብሔር (ገጽ 348)

[Above all, what I want to tell you is that this day is the beginning of a new historical era for the new Ethiopia. A new task awaits us in the new era.

Many difficulties that we experienced in the past five years have given us lessons in our heart to bring national unity and love for the good of Ethiopia. In the new Ethiopia, we wish you all to be free, united and equal citizens by law

You have to work with us for the development and prosperity of the country, for the development of agriculture, education and art, for the well being of the life and wealth of the people, and the establishment of a new government administration system.

It is our wish to establish a government that respects religion, freedom of people and work what is good for our country and the people

Ethiopia has got victory over its enemy and has restored its freedom after a bitter struggle, toiling, misery and sacrifice made for five years, beginning from October 11/1935. Today Ethiopia has changed its colour and is showing progress in a new direction. ...Ethiopia stretches - out her hands to God.]

The speech was delivered, as the Emperor always does, to the people in the first person plural, “we”, point of view, and a figurative representation of the Emperor as a symbol to the people of Ethiopia. Haileselassie often addressed the people by referring to himself as “we”, not “I”, to symbolically show that he, as a leader of the people, is always with the people and the people are always with him. In other words, it is to mean that the Emperor lives for the people; their worry is his worry; their success is his success and vice versa. In the speech he delivered on the Independence Day, he urged the Ethiopian people to work hard in order to achieve the desired change in the country.

The novel, *Agazi*, reflects these hopes and aspirations of the people and the government, and the effort that the Emperor made for change in the new era (1969: 95 - 97):

የአዲሲቱ ኢትዮጵያ መሥራች ቀዳማዊ ኃይለሥላሴ በመንበረ መንግስታቸው ተቀመጡ። ኢትዮጵያ ከሞት የተነሳችበትን ዘመን አዲስ ዘመን ብለው ሰየሙት። የሀገራቸውንና የሕዝባቸውንም አስተዳደር ባዲስ መንገድ መሩት (1969፣95)።

እድሜ ለኃይለሥላሴ እንኳን አገራችን በእጃችን ገባች እንጂ ከእንግዲህስ ወዲህ ለነሯችን እናውቅበታለን። ከመቼውም ይልቅ ተከተል አለቃህን ተመልከት ዓላማህን ተፋቀር ከወንድምህ ተደጋገፍ ከዘመድህ ተምረህ ሰልጥን ሰልጥነህ ተመስገን የተባለውን መፈጸሙን እናምናለን። . . . እነሆ

በእግዚአብሔር ቸርነትና በግርማዊ ንጉሠ ነገስት ብርታት አገሩ ተገኝቷል። ነጻነት ተመልሷል። የተበተነ ተሰብስቧል። የተሰደደ ወደ አገሩ ተመልሷል። የወጣ ገብቷል። ዓይኖችንን ያፈነው የዕንባ ጉም ተገፏል። ከመከራ ስጥመት ወጥተን በሙሉ ደስታ ላይ እንገኛለን።(1969፣ 96)

እግዚአብሔር ሰው ሁል ጊዜ ወደፊቱ ያለውን እየተመለከተ በስተኋላ ከቀረውም ይልቅ ወደፊት ያለውን ኑሮውን እንዲያስተውል ዓይኖቹን ፈጥሮለታል። ለኛም ይህ አዲሱ ጊዜ አዲስ ዓይን ስለፈጠረልን ወደፊት አርቆና አዝልቆ ማየት አለብን። ማዬት ብቻ አይደለም። በማየት በተገኘው የአዕምሮ መሳሪያ ላዲሱ ኑሮ አዲስ ሰራተኛ ሁኖ ለመገኘት ጊዜ በመከራ ኮልቶ ያደሰው አዲሱ ሕዝብ አዲስ ጊዜ መፍጠር ያስፈልገዋል (1969፣97)።

[Emperor Haileselassie I, the founder of the new Ethiopia, has regained the throne. He named the period of the resurrection of Ethiopia “the new era”. He started leading the country and his people in a new administrative system.

Long life to Emperor Haileselassie I, the founder of the new Ethiopia! The country has restored its freedom. Hereafter we are conscious of our lives. ...Unlike the previous time, we believe that the principles: “follow your leader and focus on your objective!”, “Love your brother and cooperate with your relatives!”, “Be a civilized man through education and then be praised!” have been accomplished. ... With the blessing of God and the courage of His Majesty, we got back our country; our freedom is restored; the exiled people have returned home. The mist of tear that covered our eyes is gone; we have got out of misery and we are cheerful.

God created our eyes in the front part of our face so that we can look more forward than looking always back. Likewise, we have to look forward since the new era enables us to see with new eyes. It is not enough to see forward; rather, the people using their rich minds that are enriched by far reaching experiences should establish a new era.]

Filmiya (2009) acknowledges the contribution of the government of Haileselassie in, at least, the spread of modern education and civilization, around the beginning of the political period. The novelist explains that the government has contributed to stopping slavery and giving freedom to slaves, as well as spreading education and civilization (*Filmiya*, 2009: 3-4):

በሀገራችን ለረጅም ዘመን ተንሰራፍቶ የቆየው ባላባታዊው ሥርዓት የሰውን ልጅ እኩልነትና ነጻነት ተንሰራፍቶ ከባርነት የመሸጥና መለወጥ ቀንበር በመሰባበሩ ዘመናዊውን ትምህርት በማስተዋወቁና የአውሮፓን የሥልጣኔ ጨረር እንዲፈነጥቅ ማድረጉ በወቅቱ በሰዎች ዘንድ የተከበረና የተወደደ እንደነበረ የታሪክ ትውስታችን ነው።

[History enables us to remember that the feudal rule that existed in the country had condemned human beings to slavery and denied their equality and freedom for many years. The new government was loved and respected by the people since it abolished slavery, and introduced modern education and European civilization.]

Like the novels, Marcus in his historical research reflected the fresh start that the Emperor hoped and announced to the people in his freedom day speech (2003:19):“on his return to Addis Ababa on 5 May 1941, six years from the day of his flight, Haileselassie went to his palace, where he raised the Ethiopian flag and addressed the nation. He talked of fresh starts, new eras”. Bahru also notes that the career of Haileselassie had a purpose and progressive content during the first five years after his coronation and in the initial years after 1941 (2002a: 201, 2002b).

There is plausibility in the presentation of the novels on the hopes and aspirations of the people of that period. The novels, *Ariaya*, *Agazi* and *Filmiya*, represent the events overtly and credibly. Since the events were positive for both the rulers and the people, no negative portrayal of the events is observed in the novels, whether they were published in the contemporaneous or in the post-contemporaneous period of the events. The novels indeed reflected the reality, though at different levels of focus and depth.

At least in the first decade after the restoration of freedom, some promising developments were observed in different sectors, such as the formation of central government and the writing of a new constitution, and progress in education, commerce, foreign relations, modern and extensive farming. The continuing tradition of the formation of a unitary and central government and its modern structural organization is represented in the Amharic novels through dialogues and organizations of stories. For example, *Ariaya* (1968:138-150) clearly acknowledges the formation of a central government system. The representation of this event even fairly resembles the objective descriptions of historical research studies like that of Bahru (2002a:137-148). The character narrator, Araya, goes to the extent of suggesting what the administration system and the relationships between the administrators and the people should look like in the future. In this regard, the character, Araya (1968:142-143) suggests that governors appointed at different levels (such as provincial, district or sub district) should realize that they are servants rather

than masters of the people. He believes that the people should love and respect the governors with an understanding that the governors are appointed to serve the people, rather than to rule and dominate them.

The subject of centralized government is reflected in the novels *Adäfrīs* and *Filmiya*. In *Adäfrīs*, for instance, the character, Adefris, and his uncle, Tiso, are sent to Debre Sina by the central government. Tiso, as a higher judge, is sent to the district to investigate cases which could not be solved at district level by the district bureau of justice. Similarly, Adefris as a university student is sent to Debre Sina by the then university college of Haileselesie in collaboration with the Ministry of Education of Ethiopia to give national service for a year as a teacher in his field of specialization. The novel, *Filmiya*, shows the existence of a centralized government system with inefficient management of aristocrats and landlords working against the interest of the people. In this novel (2009: 21, 51), the governor of Arsi province is appointed by the Emperor, and the governors of districts like Chilalo and Huruta are appointed after the governor of the province made consultations with the central government, to ensure that they are not outside the interest of the central government.

The subject of education is reflected in different degrees in *Ariaya*, *Agazi*, *Adäfrīs* and *Filmiya*. Each novel has something to say about education, or describes the Emperor's contribution to the introduction and expansion of education, civilization and modernization. *Adäfrīs*, for instance, reflects the need for the introduction of education and the eradication of illiteracy so that people can read and write, and consequently lead a better life (1970: 225):

ሕዝቡ ቢወድም ባይወድም በግድም ቢሆን የተሻለውን ኑሮ እንዲያውቅ መማር አለበት - - - በየቦታው ተማሪ ቤት መክፈት - - የግንብና የሳንቃ ቤቶች ሳይሆን ብዙ የጭቃ ቤቶች መሥራት - - - ዘመናዊም ሆነ ጥንታዊ ትምህርት የተማሩን መምህራን መቅጠር፤ ቢያንስ ቢያንስ ሕዝቡን ማንበብና መጻፍ እንዲችሉ ማድረግ። ከዚያ በኋላ የተሻለውን የኑሮ አስተሳሰብ የሚያሳዩ መጻህፍትን አሳትሞ መበተን - -! ማን ያውቃል በዚያን ጊዜ የህዝቡ አስተሳሰብ የቱን ያህል እንደሚለወጥ - -

አልፎ አልፎ ጉልበት እያወጣ ሥሩን እያዘመተና እያለመለመ መሬት ለመሬት ተስቦ ሜዳውን እንደሚይዘው የሰኔ ሰርዶ በየጠቅላይ ግዛቱ በያውራጃው በየወረዳው በየቀበሌው ሥሩን ሰደደ ዘመናዊ ትምህርት። - የመስፋፋቱ አዋጅ ከመሰማቱ ያፈራሩ ማማር ዜና እግር በእግር ተከተለ።

[The people whether they like it or not, should be educated. . . . Schools must be established Constructions must be made from locally available materials like mud rather than expensive stones and flat woods Employing teachers trained whether in modern or traditional schools; give people basic education so as to make them read and write; publishing and distributing books that deal with philosophy of life. Who knows! People may be changed over time...

Like a type of grass that spreads fast and covers the whole area of a field, modern education is expanded in different provinces, districts and sub-districts. Soon after the proclamation of the expansion of schools was heard, the news about its good results followed.]

The novel, *Adäfrīs*, further represents an issue in education through dialogues made between two characters, Woldu and Adefris. In the first paragraph of the dialogue, they raise a problem related to language of education, and in the paragraph that follows, a possible solution to the problem is suggested (1970: 159 - 160):

“ሕዝቡ - - የጡት ማስጣያ ቀንቋዬ ትግሪኛ ነው - - ኦሮሚኛ ነው - - ጉራጊኛ ነው - - ሶማሊኛ ነው - - - ባማርኛ የተጻፉ መጻህፍትን አልፈልግም ያለስ እንደሆነ ደግሞ ጥቂቱ ሕዝብ...”

“እኔ ይህ ሁሉ መሰናክል ሊሆን አይችልም ባይ ነኝ. . . በጡት ማስጣያ ቋንቋቸው የሚያመካኙ ቢኖሩ በማስገደድ ሳይሆን ጡት ማስጣያ ባልሆነው ቋንቋ የሚያንን ሥራ ሠርቶ ሰኪር ጉንዳንን እንደሚስብ ዓይነት እንዲሰባቸው ያሻል፡፡”

[“What do we do if people claim that their mother tongue is ‘Tigrigna’ or ‘Oromifa’¹⁹ or ‘Guragegna’ or Somali? . . . What do we do if some people say that they don’t want to learn in books written in Amharic? . . .”

“I don’t think all these things will happen . . . If there are people that relate the problem to their first tongue, the solution is to work hard on the other language and attract the people, like an ant is attracted by sugar, and arouse their interest towards the national language”.]

In these extracts, the characters raised a real social problem in the period. All ethnic groups were forced to learn primary education with Amharic and English as mediums of instruction, rather than in their own mother tongues. This was a cause for ethnic conflicts in that the non Amharic speakers considered the Amharic language, as the language of the rulers. So the problem raised by Adefris was a critical one not only

¹⁹ The word “Galliña”, rather than “Oromifa” is used in the original text. The latter word is used for the language of the ethnic people called now by the name “Oromifa”

for that particular period, but also for the political period that followed. One of the characters, Ato Woldu, suggested that it is not by force, but by providing some benefits to those whose mother tongue is not Amharic.

Another problem raised in connection to education is the existence of indirect colonialism in the system. The theme is raised by the character, Adefris, taking into consideration the experiences of a student and an expatriate staff. The student gives his article to the expatriate English teacher for edition and the teacher makes some changes in the content. When Adefris rereads the article, he observes changes from the original content. The student's writing, and the teacher's edition of the article becomes a cause for the dialogue between Adefris and Kibret, in which Adefris broadens the subject and expresses his fear that since the curriculum is European and the teachers are expatriates, they want to inculcate their ideas in the minds of students and undermine the local ones. The following is an extract from the dialogue (1970: 295 - 296):

የራሳችንን ሐሳብ እያገነዘቡ የነሱን ሃሳብ ብቻ እንድናደንቅ ነው የሚፈልጉት። መብሰል ሳይሆን እየተለወጡ ሄዱ እንጂ ተማሪዎቻችን - ከነሱ የሚፈልጉትን እስኪያገኙ ድረ ተለውጠው ቁጭ ሆነዬ!! የራሳቸው የሆነ ነገር ያስጠላቸው ጀመረ - በእንጊሊዝኛ ቃል ያልተገኘለት ያማርኛ ቃል - በእንጊሊዝኛ ለመግለጽ የሚያስችግር ኢትዮጵያዊ ሃሳብ በእንጊሊዝኛ ቋንቋ የማይገለጽና የሌለ ማንኛውም ኢትዮጵያዊ ባህል ዋጋ እንደሌለው ተቆጠረ እንጂ (ገጽ 294)።

ዱሮ መሬትህ ነበር በቅኝ አገዛዝ የሚያዘው ዛሬ ሰውነትህን ሰብዕናህን ለቅኝ ገዢዎች ሰጥተህ ትቀራለህ ነው የምልህ ለምሳሌ አሁን የጥንቱን የተመለከትህ እንደሆነ ሰብዕናቸው በቅኝ ገዢዎች ያልተያዘ ስለነበረ መሬታቸውንም ቢያጡ ለማስመለስ ችለው ነበር። ዛሬ ግን እንዳያያዛችን መሬታችን ቢያዝ እንኳ በየትኛው ሰብዕናችን እናስመልሰዋለን - -? ደግሞስ ሰብዕናችንን እያጣን ከሄድን መሬታችንንስ ጭምር እያጣን ላለመሄዳችን ምን መተማመኛ አለን? ሰብዕናችን ሲገዛ መሬታችንም መገዛቱ አይታዋቀንም ይሆን? ተመልሶ የኛ የመሆን ተስፋ በሌለው አኳኋን - - በየትኛው ሰብዕናችን ልናስመልሰው - - -? እኛንም መሬታችንንም እንዴት አድርገን የምንችል ይመስልሃል ከቅኝ አገዛዝ ሥር ለማውጣት? (296)

[“They undermine what is ours, while they want us to appreciate their ideas. Our students are not matured enough to think independently; rather they are influenced by foreigners. They do not like what we have. The ideas and cultures that belong to us but can not be expressed in the English language are worthless for them.”...

“In the past, it was your land that was colonized; nowadays, however, it is your personality or mind that is colonized. In the past, our fathers were able to restore their freedom and country since it was their land that was colonized; but now, how can we restore our land and freedom once our personality is colonized? What is our guarantee not to lose our land if our minds and personalities are colonized? Don’t you know that our land is colonized at the same time when our mind or personality is colonized? How can we get back our land and personality?”]

The foundation and development of education are further raised in the dialogue between Adefris and the priest character (1970: 99). *Agazi* also pronounces what the Emperor has contributed to the expansion of education and establishment of schools as well as system of education (1968: 5 - 6). Even though it is light, different chapters in *Filmiya* (for example, 2009: 3 - 4), represent the issue of education. In the introduction of the novel, for instance, the author acknowledges the contribution that Haileselassie made in introducing modern education and European civilization into the country. *Ariaya* also witnessed the progress that the Ethiopians made towards civilization under the leadership of Haileselassie (1968: 58).

The expansion of education in different parts of the country was facilitated by the existence of a centralized government. Schools were established even at the level of sub-districts. Coordinated work was done between different offices at different levels to support the education system. The government employed teachers from different countries and assigned them to teach in different schools in the country. Bahru (2002a: 220) believes that more progress was observed in the development of education, and that there was expansion of schools and other educational facilities in the post-war years than in the pre-war period. Like education, administration, commerce, justice, and security were also facilitated by the centralized government bureaucracy.

Foreign investment and agro-industry are the other issues represented in the novels, *Filmiya*, *Ariaya* and *Maibäl Yabiyot Wazema*. *Filmiya* sets part of its setting around Wonji sugar factory located in a place called Wonji. The Wonji sugar factory is founded around the Awash River. Most of the shares of the factory belonged to a foreign company called Handelsvereeninging Amsterdam (HVA) (Bahru, 2002a: 198 - 199; *Filmiya*, 2009: 165 - 166). The factory won the Haileselassie I prize Trust in 1966 for its contribution to the development of the economy and for generating

employment (Berihun, 2000: 540). The novel presents how the company was founded, who the owners are, the living conditions of the office workers and the day labourers, the strike that the labourers made and their demand for labour law and their rights through the dialogue that takes place between Dejen (another name of Sintayehu) and his friend.

Araya in his conversation with the secretary general of the Ethiopian consul in Djibouti raises the importance of foreign investments. The two characters differ in their outlooks on the issue. The secretary general does not support foreign investments since he thinks that the resource of the country goes to foreigners and makes Ethiopians dependent. For the secretary general, investment should not be opened to foreigners, at least until the Ethiopians are competent enough in the business world. On the contrary, Araya believes investment helps in the development of the country (1968: 121-122):

የወጭ አገር ሰዎች ባገራችን ውስጥ ሥራ ቢያስፋፉና ቁጥራቸውም ቢበረክት ለሕዝባችን መነቃቂያና የመበልጸጊያ መንገድ ይሆንለታል እንጂ ሊጎዳው አይችልም። እንደ ኢትዮጵያ ሰፊ የተፈጥሮ ሀብት ላለው አገር ሀብቱን ሰውሮ ቁም ነገር ሳያሲዘው እንዲሁ አቆየዋለሁ ለማለት አይገባውም።

[If more foreign investors are able to invest in our country, it could not be, by any means, disadvantageous for our people; it would rather be useful for our people to learn from the experiences of foreign investors. It could not be appropriate for a country like Ethiopia to keep its rich resources idle.]

The issue of modern farming is also represented in the novel in relation to the experience of the main character, Araya. At one time, Araya gets dissatisfied with the job in the government sector, and decides to invest money in agriculture in his private three “gashas” of land which is equivalent to 120 thousand hectares.

Maibäl Yabiyot Wazema raises the issue of modern farming in relation to the land ownership problem of the Wollo peasants. Like the peasants in the southern part of the country, the land which belonged to the Wollo peasants was owned by aristocrats and feudal lords to whom the Emperor gave as reward or gift for their loyalty and service. After displacing the peasants, the aristocrats used their land for extensive farming (1979: 11-17).

As previously discussed, issues of investments, modern farming and establishment of industries are plausibly reflected in the novels, *Ariaya*, *Maibäl Yabiyot Wazema* and *Filmiya*. But, *Filmiya*, of all the novels, gives much more focus to the establishment of the factories. In general, political issues related to the hopes and aspirations of the people that prevailed for some years after the restoration of freedom have been represented in the selected Amharic novels in a realistic manner.

4.2.2. The Doom of the Hope and Progress of the People

Although the hopes and aspirations of the people seemed to be real in the post-independence period, many new and old problems rooted in the society dashed them. People, especially in the southern region, lost their land because the Emperor granted them to the nobility, the military and his loyal patriots. Peasants were forced to sell their lands to landlords and investors for extensive farming. Consequently, the people whose lands were seized or sold became serfs and tillers to the landlords; others migrated to cities and became homeless day labourers, beggars, or factory workers. The peasants were forced to pay tributes, to do difficult jobs for the landlords, and pay taxes to the government. The difference between the haves and the have-nots increased. Inequality, poverty, domination and maladministration grew. Democratic rights were violated. This was a dilemma of the period, in which progress was observed in different educational, economic, foreign relation and administrative fields, on the one hand, and on the other, feudalism was strengthened and problems that emanated from it (problems of landownership and inequality) became worse. These developments are explored in Bahru (2002a) and portrayed in the novels in different ways. In connection to this, Bahru (2002a: 178) writes that the period was marked by absolutism and feudalism and this undermined the hopes of progress:

The period 1941 to 1974 represents a summation of modern Ethiopian history. Emperor Tewodros's efforts at centralization in the nineteenth century were consummated in the absolutism of Emperor Hayla-sellase in the twentieth century. The perennial quest for a sea coast was finally realized with the federation and then union of Eritrea with Ethiopia. The land privatization process initiated with the institution of land - measurement (qalad), and unequal distribution increased. Extensive land grants by the state to its officials and supporters reduced a substantial portion of the peasantry to the status of tenancy, particularly in the southern half of the country. Peasant rebellions, rare phenomena before the Italo-Ethiopian war, became almost endemic after it. ... For the Ethiopian state, the pre-war policy of manoeuvring among a number of foreign powers gave way to increasing

dependence on one, the United States of America, which provided the infrastructural and super structural support for the consolidation of absolutism.

Yet, by some kind of historical paradox, the period which marked the high point of Ethiopian feudalism also witnessed its decay and eventual demise.

In reflecting the doom of the hopes and aspirations of the people, Abe (2001, 2nd ed²⁰: 20) in a new introduction, “Adiss Mäghiya” to his second edition of the novel, *Aliwäälädim*, notes:

አልወለድምን በጻፍሁ ጊዜ አገሪ በጨለማ የግዜው ሁኔታ ብቻ ሳይሆን በጨለማ የወደፊት እድል ላይ ትታየኝ ነበር።

[When I wrote the novel, *Aliwäälädim*, my country was not only in dark at the moment, but I also saw its dark future.]

Similarly, *Filmiya* (2009: 3-4) reflected that the feudal regime abolished slavery and introduced modern education and European civilization; but, that was not enough to meet the growing demands of the people. People urged changes in administration, production relationships and a way of life that the feudal regime could not satisfy. The contradiction between the rulers and the ruled increased because the aristocrats did not care for the masses. They accumulated wealth at the expense of the labour of the peasants and workers; they denied them human value, and the democratic and civil rights of the people. They took the land of the people by force and displaced them. Peasants paid tributes and performed difficult work for them. Consequently, people lost trust in the government and began to rebel and stage an insurrection. This situation is described in *Filmiya* (2009: 3 - 4):

በሀገራችን ለረጅም ዘመን ተንሰራፍቶ የቆየው ባላባታዊው ሥርዓት የሰውን ልጅ እኩልነትና ነጻነት ከባርነት የመሸጥና መለወጥ ቀንበር በመሰባበሩ ዘመናዊውን ትምህርት በማስተዋወቁና የአውሮፓን የሥልጣኔ ጨረር እንዲፈነጥቅ ማድረጉ በወቅቱ በሰዎች ዘንድ የተከበረና የተወደደ እንደነበረ የታሪክ ትውስታችን ነው። ጌላ ግን የሰው ልጆች እድገትና ፍላጎት እየጎለበተ ሲሄድ መሰረታዊ የሰዎችን እድገት ለውጥ ሊያረካው አልቻለም። ይህ ከመሆኑ ይልቅ የገዢው መደብ በገናናነቱ እያየለና እየበረታ ከተራው ሀዝብ ተለየ፤ ባዕድም ሆኖ ተመለከ። ለያይተህ ግዛው መስተዳድሩ በሰዎች ላብ በግፍ የተሰበሰበ የሀብት ክምችት ሰዎችን ከዕድገት ይልቅ መጫጫትንና የህልውና ባርነት ጥሎባቸዋል። የሰዎችን ህሊናና ሀብት አሽመድምዶ

²⁰ The copy of the novel, *Aliwäälädim*(2001), used for discussion is the 2nd edition of the 1974 publication. Otherwise, *Aliwäälädim* is first published in 1963.

ከእግሩ በታች አውሎታል። ያለውና የሌለው እየተባለ ክፍተቱ በጣም ሰፊ ህይወቱን ከግብርናው ጋር ያቆራኘው ብዙሃኑ ኢትዮጵያዊ ቤተሰብ መደተዳደሪያው መሬት በግፈኞች መቀማት ተለመደ። የመንግስት ባለ ስልጣንን ማክበር እንደፍርሃት ተቆጠረ፤ ቀስ በቀስ ህዝባዊ አመጽ በሽፍትነት ተጀመረ፤ ያልደፈረም የገዢ መደቦች ጥገኛ ጢሰኛ ሆኑ። ከኖረበት ተሰደደ።

[History tells us that the feudal system that existed for a long period was at the time respected and liked by the people for it abolished slavery and introduced modern education and European civilization. But through time, the system could not cope with the growing interest of the people about change. The ruling class slowly detached itself from the people and became dictatorial and was worshipped like Idols. The government's divide and rule policy and the wealth accumulated at the expense of the ordinary people made the lower class life a slave's life. The gap between the rich and the poor increased. The peasants who were dependent on land lost their lands to the ruling class members: the feudal lords and investors. Thus, respecting the officials was considered to be a sign of fear. Slowly, the people started to rebel and protest. Those who were not courageous enough remained peasants.]

This description by the novel, regarding the puzzling nature of the period is the same as the explanation given by Bahru (see, p. 116). Therefore, the representations of the historical and political events in *Filmiya* and in the other novels are significant or noticeable.

These historical and political presentations are made in different manners. *Filmiya* shows the events through the commentaries of the narrators, the interactions of the characters and the organization of the story. *Adäfiris* represents the events through the dialogues of characters and other techniques like turn taking, and through descriptions of places (Feqade, 1998). Concerning the analysis of textual forms and linguistic organization, Fairclough (1995: 188) asserts:

Linguistic analysis in an extended sense to cover not only the traditional levels of analysis within linguistics (phonology, grammar upto the level of the sentence, and vocabulary and semantics) but also analysis of textual organization above the sentence, including intersentential cohesion and various aspects of the structure of texts which have been investigated by discourse analysts and conversation analysts (including properties of dialogue such as the organization of turn-taking).

In a dialogue that takes place between a landlady, Asegash, and a nameless peasant in *Adäfiris*, it is the landlady who dominates the conversation. She talks in a relaxed

manner, while the peasant is worried in responding to her; she talks much, while he is reserved; she sometimes even does not give him turn to talk during their conversations. Hence, such linguistic matters reveal the kind of relationships of the landlady and the peasant.

The novels largely represent the events explicitly; and in some instances the events are embedded in the structure of the novels or the organization of the story as well as the actions of the characters. The ruling class is portrayed negatively by narrators and character narrators as the novels intend to show the injustice made by the aristocrats. All the novels, except *Filmiya* reflect events contemporaneously, while *Filmiya* is written in the post contemporaneous period of the events. Thus, *Filmiya*, in particular, is able to show explicitly the injustices that the feudal lords committed.

4.2.2.1. Class Composition and Production Relationships among the Different Classes of the Society

The main reason for the failures of the hopes and the country's progresses, and the fall of the Haileselassie government was the unhealthy relationships between the rulers and the ruled, i.e, the feudal lords and the peasantry, and the workers and the capitalists.

Haileselassie's feudal Ethiopia was composed of an upper class comprising the royal family, the aristocrats, the feudal lords, the factory owners and the rich merchants on the one hand, and the peasantry, the working class and daily labourers on the other. There was also the middle class, which provided service to the rulers.

The novel, *Adäfiräs*, represents different classes that the society composed in Haileselassie's period. The feudal lady characters, Asegash and Akelat, represent members of the upper class; however, less concern is given to the latter. Unlike Akelat, Asegash is given a significant space in the novel as a landlady who lives by renting her land to peasants and collecting tributes. She receives equal and/or one third share from her tenants.

The "nameless peasant", Wordofa, Asegash's employee peasant who works full-time for her, and the other servants represent the lower class, especially the peasantry, with the primary setting in the rural area of Debre Sina. Unlike Wordofa, the "nameless peasant" works for himself on the land that belongs to Asegash by paying tribute to

her; the yield that he gets from his farm land is too small to cover the basic needs of his family. Therefore, he requests the landlady to lend him grain seeds. The peasant represents those tenants who work on rented land and pay either half or one third of the yield to the landlords. Wordofa and the other 'servant farmers' represent those who work full-time for the landlords, with small or no payment. These peasants are employed by the landlady, because they are incapable to feed their families with the small share they get from their harvests.

Although slavery is not given a significant space in the novel, *Adäfiris*, it is represented by the character, Atahuworota, a female slave that belongs to the landlady, Akelat. Readers are not told that she is a slave, but they can tell from her name, as the name indicates her being a slave. Such names are given to the slaves by their owners. Atahuworota washes and massages the feet of the members of the family every night before they go to bed (1970: 70). This is one of the relationships between slaves and slave owners through which power is disclosed.

The character, Adefris, who represents the educated young, seems to be progressive, but in reality, he is not. Adefris sometimes talks about equality, modernization and change; also, he condemns some traditional values of the church and the society. He preaches that education and civilization are the means by which the problems of the people could be solved. However, he lacks objectivity. We, for instance, see a situation where peasants who were seeking his support could not understand what he was saying; he says one thing, while the people say something else (1970: 39-43).

There seems to be a dilemma in what Adefris believes and what he does. For this reason he vanished early without reaching his destination to complete his education and be a professional person. Adefris is not dedicated to revolution, perhaps because he is from the upper class; he is the son of the landlady, Akelat. Therefore, his background does not seem to allow him to struggle for change. Ato Tiso, Woldu and Kibret represent the intelligentsia. Ato Tiso is a judge who is not exposed to bribery. Woldu and Kibret are a small merchant and a painter, respectively. They are literate people who understand the objective situation of the country. Though they want change, they give due respect to the old values of the society.

Aliwälälīm is a novel in which members of the upper and lower classes and the intelligentsia are found. The social classes that are represented in the novel are reflections of the class composition during Haileselassie's period, which included feudal lords from the upper class, the intelligentsia, office workers and military officials from the middle class, and the homeless, beggars, day labourers, the peasantry and factory workers from the lower class. The upper class is represented by Mussie Garabadov and the military leader, Marshall Javerous; the intelligentsia is represented by the doctor, and the nameless character; and the poor people are represented by the mother of the nameless character (Ghirmai, 1995: 145). Like the aristocratic state of Haileselassie's Ethiopia, Israelos of *Aliwälälīm* was an aristocratic state before the coup.

Filmiya represents landlords and factory owners from the upper class, and peasants, workers and prostitutes from the lower class. Fitawrari Tafese, the feudal lord and head of the Itosa sub-district and his respective chiefs, Seifu and Awraris, represent the ruling class, while Tsedu and his neighbours represent the peasantry. Sentayehu and the labourers of the Wonji sugar factory represent the middle and the working class respectively. Lulit and Tsehay represent the prostitutes.

In *Maibäl Yabiyot Wazema* one comes across different classes. The landlady, Zerfeshiwal, the bureaucrat, Guangul, represent the ruling class, while Muhe, Zeinu and Kassahhun represent the peasantry. In *Maibäl Yabiyot Wazema*, the character, Sewbata, is a slave owned by lady Zerfeshiwal. It is reported that Zerfeshiwal deliberately shot Sewbata on her leg for she suspected that her husband had sexual relations with her. No one asked Zerfeshiwal for the injury she inflicted on Sewbata.

The points of view in which the classes in the society in Haileselassie's period are presented differ from one novel to the other. As discussed in the previous paragraphs, for instance, the novel, *Agazi*, portrays the Emperor positively while *Baša Qit'aw* characterizes him negatively. The feudal lords and the administrators are negatively represented in the novel *Filmiya*, *Adäfiris* and *Aliwälädīm*.

Understanding the novels in terms of class representation justifies neo historicism's principle that understanding of contexts in which texts are read have equal influence as that of the context in which the texts are produced in understanding novels (see

2.1.5.1) because the concept of class was introduced to most Ethiopian readers during the revolution, when the country began to follow socialism. For P. C. Kar (as cited in Tiwary and Chandra, 2009: 86), there are three types of contexts, authorial context, textual context and reader's context. Hence, a literary text should be read and interpreted in terms of these three different contexts.

The novels not only show the existence of different classes, but also the production relationships. The relationship between peasants and landlords is reflected in the novels, *Adäfiris* and *Filmiya*. In *Adäfiris*, the peasants that plough Asegash's land not only give her half or one third of the harvest, but also pay her in kind, like honey and butter. They are obliged to do hard work for the lady. They plough her extra farmland, collect the harvest, collect fire wood, make fences, fetch water from spring, and take care of her cattle. Some farmers borrow grains from the landlady on high interest. If they fail to pay the grain including the unlawful interest and tribute, they give their children to her, to work for her until they pay the debt. If they are unable to pay their debit, the children become her servants for ever (1970: 93 - 94, 157).

The relationships read in the novel, *Filmiya*, are mainly between the landlords and the peasantry, and between factory owners and workers. The relationship between the landlords and peasantry is represented plausibly in the introduction and other parts of the novel, especially, in the first eleven chapters. Then the production relationships between factory owners and workers, and masters and servants continue to be reflected through the lives of Sentayehu and Tsehay, respectively.

The relationship between the landlords and the peasantry with regard to land ownership is mainly reflected through novelistic techniques like story, conflict and characterization. The main conflict in the novel is between the feudal lord, Gerazmach Taffese (later promoted to the next title, Fitawrari) and the peasant, Tsedu. The administrator of Liben district, Girazmach Tafesse, wants to get the fertile fruit-farm of the peasant, Tsedu, and make it part of the farmland owned by Dejazmach Seifu, the governor of the province, to show his respect for his boss, and get some reward from it. When Tafese fails to get the fertile fruit-farm of Tsedu in the form of exchange or sell, he seized it by force and displaced the family. Consequently, Tsedu's first son, Sentayehu, escapes after killing two lower officials and their two other servants in revenge for what Tafesese and his men did to the family.

As a reward to the gift (of the seized land) that Taffese offered to Dejazmach Seifu, he is promoted to the title of Fitawrari and the governor of Asela district. On the other hand, Tsedu, the deprived peasant blames the governors and the Emperor for the evil act they commit on the peasants. Tsedu, who was a patriot during the Italian occupation, expresses his resentment that patriots who fought the Italians for five years to free their motherland had to be rewarded; but he, let alone be rewarded, his private land was annexed by the administrators. He blames the administrators and the Emperor for their evil deeds as shown in the following monologue (2009: 40 - 41):

አይ አንቺ ሰንደቅ አላማ ደሜን አፍስሼ አጥንቴን ከትክቼ ከጠላት አልተፋለምኩ ከሆነ አንቺ ፍረጂኝ። አባቶቼም ለነጻነትሽና ለአንድነትሽ ኮርተው እንዳልተሰጠልሽ የተከሰከሰ አጥንታቸው ይመስክር፤ ድንበራችን በግፈኞች ላይ ይፍረድ፤ በማይጨው የፈረጠመ ክንዴ ዛሬም ሞፈር ቀንበሩን ለመግፋት ብርቱ ነው። ታዲያ ዛሬ ከባዱን ጦርነት በድል እንዳልተወጣሁት ነጻ በምንለው ምድራችን ላይ የመኖር ዋስትና እንነፈግ! የዛሬዎቹ ንጉሶችና ነገስታት ጋሻ ጃግሬዎቻቸው ርዝራዣቸው መኖሪያና መጠቀሚያ ብቻ ትሁን! ከጠላት ጉርሮ አውጥተን እኛስ የት ልንደርስ? ልጆቻችንስ? ተከብረን በኖርንበትና እትብታችን ከተቀበረባትና አልምተንና አሳምረን በያዝነው የበሬ ግንባር በምታክል መተዳደሪያ ርስታችን ላይ እንደገና ተመልሰን የሰው ባሪያ እንሁን! መሬታችን እስከመቼ ለገዢዎችና መሰሎቻቸው ገነት ለኛ ግን ሲኦል ፈረ እስከመቼ በደሜ በገዛሁት ርስቱ የበይ ተመልካች ልሁን! እግዚአብሔር እንደሰው ቸኩሎ አይፈርድም፤ ለተበደሉትም ቅን እውነተኛ የማያዳላ ፈራጅ ዓምላክ ነው። ተገፍቼያለሁና ዓምላኬ ሆይ ፍረድልኝ፤ አንተ አደላድለህ በሰጠዎት ምድር ላይ ገዢና ባሪያ ሀብታምና ደህ ከየት ተፈጠረ? አዎ ለዚህ ሁሉ ሰበብ ገዢዎቻቸውና አሸርጋጆቻቸው በስግብግብነት ያመጡት ችግር ነው። ኃይለኛው ደካማውን እየቀማ እያባበለና እያታለለ ያለ መሬት ያስቀረዋል። አይ ልጆቼ የእናንተ መኖር እጄን አስርኛል፤ እናንተን በጨለማ አዳፍኖ መሄድ ነፍሴን ጨነቃት እናንተ ባትኖሩ ኖሮ አንጆቴና ቆሽቴ እንዳረረ ሆዴ ከጀርባዬ እንዲህ ተጣብቆ ባልቀረ! እንደከፋኝም ባልቀረሁ። የልቤን ተበቅዬ ከሰም በረሀ በእፎይታ እኖር ነበር (ገጽ 40-41)።

[Oh my flag! Give me your judgment if I did not bleed and break my arms for your sake. Let the broken bones of our father be testimony if they have not fought for unity and freedom. Let the border that is kept free because of our fathers' blood give testimony. My arm that became strong at the battle of Maychew is still strong enough to make me work in the farm. Irrespective of my patriotic struggle at Maychew, why are we deprived of our right to live in our country freely? Does the resource of the country belong only to the king and aristocrats? Where shall we go? What about our children? Shall we live as slaves and servants in our own birth place...? When does our land stop to be hell for us and paradise for our rulers? How long do I stay neutral looking for our rulers enjoy the fruits of my land? God does not give justices in hurry!

God is always on the side of the poor; Oh God! Please give me justices! Who created slaves and slave owners, rich and poor in your world? It is those greedy rulers and their fellow men that created the difference. The powerful ones seized the lands of the poor and left them landless. Oh my children, it is life that handcuffed me. If I had been a bachelor I would have avenged for them and escaped.]

Tsedu further makes criticism against the administrators and the system in connection with the land issue, as shown in the following extract from a dialogue that Tsedu has with his neighbours (2009: 59):

መሬታችንን ሲቆርሱና ሲገፉ አንዴ በወለድ አገድ ይዘነዋል ሌላ ጊዜ ደግሞ ገዝተነዋል በዕዳ ይዘነዋል እያሉ ዛሬ እኛ ሁላችንም አንዳችን ከአንዳችን የምንሻል አይደለንም። የቀረችን የበሬ ግንባር የምታህል የእርሻ ርስት፣ ያሉን ከብቶቻችን የምናሰማራበት ቀርቶ የምናቆምበት መሬት የለንም። ያለው የግጦሽ መሬት ሳሩና ገደሉ ጭምር የሁላችንም የጋራ ንብረት የአገሬው ከብት መዋያ የነበረው በነሱው ባለቤትነት በሃይል የተወሰደ ነው። ስለዚህ እነሱን ፈጽሞ መጋፋት አንችልም፤ አባቶቻችን ተሰቃይተው ያሳለፉት ጊዜ ይበቃል። አየህ ሕግ ተጠቅሜ በሕግ እወጣለሁ እንዳትል ሕግ በድሃው ላይ እንጂ በነሱ ላይ ስለማይሰራ በነሱ እሚዳኘው ህግ ለይስሙላ ምዕራፍና ቁጥር ይዞ የተቀመጠ ነው። ማን ያንብበው ማንስ ፍትህ ይበይንበት ሕጉን በወንበሩ ላይ ተሰይሞ የሚዳኘው የለም፤ ቢኖርም መኖር አይችልም (ገጽ 59)።

[Today, none of us is better off because the rulers seized our fertile land claiming that we have not paid our debts, or saying they have bought it. We don't have grazing land since our plot of land is too small. Today we have no power to resist them. . . . We cannot take the case to court, for the law can not be enforced on them. No judge gives justice in this regard; even if there is one, he can not survive.]

The issue of land is further revealed in other experiences represented in different meta-narratives at different levels. For instance, the three merchants that Sentayehu meets on his way to Wonji have the same experiences in that the three of them became small traders after the land that belonged to their families was seized by the landowners (2009: 125 - 126). One character in the novel, Lulit, who is the intimate friend of Tsehay, became a prostitute after the land of her parents was seized by a landowner. She is forced to support her family from the income she gets from prostitution (2009: 187). In the novel, most of the daily labourers of Wonji sugar factory have also similar experiences of losing their land to the landlords and administrators. In *Filmiya*, courts are also reported to have been busy with such cases of land problem (2009: 251).

We also see that the peasants do not passively give their farmlands to the feudal lords; they don't tolerate the crime that is committed against them. They rather resist the crime and domination in different ways. Some victims go to courts, but they don't succeed as the courts are manipulated by the landlords, and the judges are bribed. Some others protest against the authorities and landlords, and take revenge by killing them, and live as rebels. This situation is reflected by the author of *Filmiya*, Ashine, in the introduction to the novel (2009: 3 - 4):

**አመጽን በማጠናከርም ሞፈሩን ሰቅሎ ጫካ ገባ ከፊሉም ጉልበቱን ባገኘው
ዋጋ ለመሸጥ ባሽከርነትና በኩሊነት በየከተማው ተሰገሰገ።**

[They left their ploughs and went to the forest to strengthen the rebellion; some went to the city to sell their cheap labour as servants and daily labourers.]

Like those who rebelled against landlords, Tsedu, thought to revenge Meshesha, but changed his mind, anticipating the problem that his family members may face (2009: 40 - 41). Although, Tsedu decides to drop his plan of killing Tafesse, his son, Sentayehu, takes revenge against Tafesse by killing his loyal people, Andarge, his son, and other three servants (2009: 116). It was such rebellions that ignited the organized uprisings of the Tigray, Gojam and Bale peasants during the reign of Haileselassie (Bahru, 2002a: 215 - 220). As Foucault notes, power relationship does not flow from one direction. It is rather bi directional (Foucault as referred by Mills, 1997: 42; Foucault in Gordon, 1980: 142). That is why peasants showed some form of resistance against the ruling class members, or the feudal lords.

In a related theme, *Aliwäladim* shows a situation that most of the land was in the hands of a few aristocratic members; the poor did not have their own private land. For instance, Muse Gerabidos, an aristocrat in the novel, claims the land that the hero character and the hero's friends have been using for agriculture for fifteen years. As an heir to the land, Muse claims tribute. Muse is later killed by the new military Junta government during the revolution (2001: 140). This was a typical case in Ethiopia, where most of the land was privately owned by a few aristocrats. Like the claim by Muse for the land and the demand for tribute from the hero and the hero's friends, the aristocrats of Ethiopia seized the land that belonged to peasants and forced them to pay tribute (2001: 130 - 131; Bahru, 2002a: 191, 216 - 217).

Aliwälädim suggests that land and its resources should be shared equally among all the citizens. Every member of the nation should have the right to work on the land and share the benefits from it. That is why the hero in the story and his nine friends invest on unsettled rural land of Israelos and develop a favourable living environment for their people. However, fifteen years later, Muse Gerabidos, the aristocrat, accuses the hero and his people of using his land. The issue of land was one of the dominant political concerns of Ethiopians in the period of Haileselassie, and “Land to the tiller!” became the slogan of the students and peasants of Ethiopia (Bahru, 2002a: 223). In relation to this, as new historicists (Bertens, 2001: 166 - 167; Brannigan, 2001: 169 - 170) note, one could see that the novels have played an important role in reflecting the problems of the society at the time and awaring people to struggle for their rights and benefits.

In the novel, *Maibäl Yabiyot Wazema*, the landlady, Zerfeshiwal, mercilessly takes grains that peasants had reserved for use as seeds when the rain comes. Peasants are not supposed to pay grain seeds as tribute; but the lady takes the grains from the mouth of the starved people, in order to make a very luxurious wedding party for her daughter.

The production relationship between workers and business owners is represented in the novels, *Filmiya* and *Aliwälädim*. *Filmiya* represents it through the Wonji sugar factory workers. This issue is portrayed clearly in the novel after Sintayehu gets employed in Wonji sugar factory as a finance worker after he took revenge. Workers are paid low wages, while the factory collects a big amount of profit. Workers live in tight quarters, while owners and office workers live in standard houses. Workers are not insured for injuries they might get at work; moreover most of the daily labourers work on contract bases. The factory workers are organized in different associations at different stages to demand their rights. They strike for salary increment, insurance for injury and accident, convenient working conditions, free medication and job security. They are further seen demanding that the organization stop dismissing innocent workers, and asking for reinstating workers that are dismissed without satisfactory reasons (2009: 217).

Filmiya’s representation of the life of the Wonji sugar factory workers is as real as the historical presentation by Bahru (2002a: 200). Similar to what we find in the novel,

Bahru explains the development of industries and the struggle of the workers of Wonji sugar factory, Endo Ethiopia textile factory, and others as follows (2002a: 198 - 199):

Assisted by the liberal investment policy of the government, and through ruthless industrial investment policy of the government, and through ruthless industrial exploitation, HVA made huge profits from its sugar - manufacturing enterprise...

Labour agitation for better pay and working conditions became a regular feature of the industrial scene. In Wonji, the first strike took place in 1954, the very year of the factory's establishment. Starting as mutual aid and savings associations ("eder" and "equb", respectively), the workers' organizations matured into full-fledged trade unions in the 1960s. Unable to resist the pressure from labour any longer, the government issued the first labour legislation in the country's history in august 1962.

Production relationship between workers and factory owners is also a concern of *Aliwäladim*. In the story, the hero character though a finance worker, realized the worst conditions of the workers and organized them to ask for their rights. Under his leadership, the workers made strikes and came up with twenty basic questions to the Minister (2001: 73 - 76).

Although the hero succeeded in his role as the leader of the workers and coordinator of the demonstration, he could not escape being the victim of the corrupt officials of the government and the company; he is dismissed from his job. Such an experience is not unique to the hero character. In reality, in Haileselassie's period a lot of leaders of workers' associations were dismissed from their jobs, detained, and even killed. For example, Abera Gemu, the chairman of the former Confederation of Ethiopian Labour Union, was murdered by security forces (Melakou, 2007: 100). Like the fictional factory workers (2001: 100, 208), the real Wonji factory and other proletariat demanded for legislations that would give opportunities to workers to form organizations and enable mutual relationships of the workers and the firms.

The novels explicitly represented the production relationships between landowners and peasants, and factory owners and workers. *Filmiya* and *Aliwäladim* focus on both relationships between factory workers and owners, and landlords and peasants, while *Adäfrīs* and *Maibäl Yabiyot Wazema* focus on peasant-landlord relationships. All the

novels portray these relationships realistically. They show the unhealthy relationships between the peasantry and the landlords, and between workers and factory owners.

4.2.2.2. Inequality, Ethnicity and Bloodline

Ethiopia is a country in which the people belong to different classes and ethnic groups. During Haileselassie's regime, there was inequality between different classes, and ethnic groups. There were also inequalities between landlords and peasants, investors and workers, the haves and the have-nots, and between the literate and illiterate. Such inequalities have been represented in some novels written during the period, and a few of them are selected for the present study.

Adäfiris, as a mirror of the way of life of the feudal society in Haileselassie's period, shows the inequalities between the landlady, Asegash, on the one hand and the peasants and her servants on the other. For Asegash, she is by no means equal to her servants. She believes that her class belongs next to God and the Emperor. Her superiority is revealed symbolically by the site in which her house is built, the materials with which her house is constructed, the design of the house and its partitions. St. Michael's church is built on the highest plateau while her house is built on the next plateau (1970: 29). As Bourdieu (paraphrased in Swartz, 1997: 6) believes, power differences between classes can be discerned through their taste, clothing style, kind of entertainment, housing and utensils, their eating and drinking habits, and the like. Thus, the differences between Asegash and her tenants could be drawn from the differences in the site selection of their houses, their designs and the household utensils.

For Asegash, the poor people are no better than flies (1970: 8) as it is shown in her dialogue:

እግዚአብሔርን መፍራት የመጀመሪያው ጥበብ ነው። ከዚያም የበላዮችህን ማክበር - ባላባቶችን፣ ባለርስቶችን፣ የንጉሳቸው ልግሥና የእግዚአብሔር ቸርነት ያልተለያቸውን . . . አዎ ዝምብ ቢጠራቀም ቋጫ አይከፍትም።

[“The first wisdom is to fear God. The next is to give respect to superiors - the feudal and the landlords that are not detached from the blessing of the Almighty and the goodwill of the king. . . . A collection of flies cannot open a pot.”]

Asegash's ideology regarding inequality is further revealed in her dialogue with Adefris and Tiso. While Adefris was talking to Tiso about the equality of human beings, Asegash interferes and explains that though human beings are created in the image of God, they are not equal (1970: 101):

ከሰውምኮ ሰው አለው፤ ከእንጨት መርጦ ለታቦት ከሰው መርጦ ለሹመት ሲባል አልሰማህም የኔ ልጅ - አሁን ለምሳሌ - አሽከሮቼን ገና ለገና በዝጊር አምሳል ተፈጥረዋል ብዬ ከኔ ጋር እኩል ናቸው ልል ነው?

[Some people are better than others. Haven't you heard the saying, 'some people are selected for title, as best woods are selected for making the Arc?' Do I have to say that my servants are equal with me for the only reason that they are created in the image of God? No, my son, they are not equal.]

Asegash, in her dialogue with Father Addise also expresses her ideology about the poor. She compares the poor to the donkey (1970: 172) as:

ዘረ ድሃ ያው አመለ ድሃ ነው... ቢሾሙት ቢሸልሙት አሁን አህያን ቢያስገቡት የትኛውን ግርማ ሞገስ ልታገኝ?

[Whether you give them titles or prizes . . . the poor are always poor in their manners . . . What is the use of decorating a donkey if it does not get grace?]

Even though father Addise is the father confessor of Asegash, and does not belong to her class, he reflects Asegash's ideology by alluding to the Bible, Mark 12:15, to justify her position (1970: 101):

፩ረ ከወዴት! ሁሉ ሰውማ እኩል ከሆነ እየሱስ ክርስቶስ ራሱ መቼ ሃቡ ዘነጋሲ ለነጋሲ ይል ነበር?

[How on earth? Why does Jesus say, render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's, if all human beings are equal?]

Similarly, Tsione (the daughter of Asegash) criticizes Roman (the daughter of Wordofa, the servant), saying “እኩል ቤት እረገጥሽ” (“īqul bet irägät’iš”) [you considered yourself as equal to me] (1970: 144). Tsione said this because Roman was trying to have a love affair with Adefris, whom Tsione had fallen in love with. For Tsione, since Roman is the daughter of a peasant, she should have to leave Adefris to her.

A similar theme is reflected in *Ariaya* through an old man who believes that all human beings are not equal. For him, it is God that created the difference. God makes some poor and some others rich; some people are born to rule and others to be ruled; kings and administrators are elects of God and they are born to rule. Therefore, for the old noble man, there are always differences among people. The Emperor as the father of the people leads Ethiopians in his will, and does not have to consult their interests. The Emperor is the guardian of the people and not a servant (1968: 139).

Contrary to the old noble man and Asegash, Araya believes that all human beings are born equal as described in his dialogue with the old noble man telling him that his views were wrong (1968: 139-140):

ጌታዬ ይህ አስተያየትዎ እጅግ ትልቅ የሆነ ስህተተኛ አለብኝ፡፡... ሰው ሁሉ በመያወና በፍጥረቱ ልዩነት አለው፡፡ ግን ይህ ልዩነት ሕዝብና ባላባት ጌታና ድሃ አይልም፡፡ . . ሰው በተፈጥሮው አንድ ስለሆነ እኩል ነው፡፡ ልዩነቱን ያመጣው የትምህርትና የሽቅድምድም ጉዳይ ብቻ ነው (ገጽ 139-140).

[My lord, your opinion has big mistakes... Every man has differences in his profession and appearance. But, this difference is not related to being a ruler and ruled, or rich and poor... Man is equal as there is no natural difference among people in being human. If there is a difference at all, that difference is a result of education and competition.]

Araya does not only argue that all human beings are equal, but also claims that each person must benefit from the resources of the country based on the knowledge and merits they have (1968: 140).

The novel *Aliwälädim* reflects inequality through a technique of characterization. Most of the characters in *Aliwälädim* are nameless. Only the aristocrat, Muse Gerabidos and the new military leader, Marshal Javerous, have names. This might perhaps be designed to show inequalities that existed between the rulers and the ruled. The poor and the learned are nameless ordinary people, who are not respected in the society. In the novel, the poor do not have their own identity and human dignity. They don't have their own shelter; they don't have their own land to plough or to use for other purposes. They don't share the resources of the country equally with the rich. It is the rulers who have big names.

The politics of bloodline are also reflected in the novels. *Filmiya* uses the technique of implicit intertextuality to reveal this theme. In other words, the novel, *Filmiya*, refers implicitly to a similar theme of the novel, *Fiqir Īskāmāqabir*. Like Meshesha of *Fiqir Īskāmāqabir*, Tafese of *Filmiya* is a highly conservative feudal lord who believes in blood ties. Both characters reject their respective daughter's marriage because of their sentiment of inequality. Meshesha of *Fiqir Īskāmāqabir* rejects the engagement of his daughter, Seblewongel, to different people, because the people are not from the noble family and royal blood. Meshesha attempts to force his daughter to marry an old divorced man, Fitawrari Asege, because Asege's status is the same as his. Similarly, Tafese rejects the marriage of his eldest daughter to a high school teacher as he thinks that the teacher does not have neither royal blood nor money, and therefore engages her to a rich, divorced merchant. When Seblewongel of *Fiqir Īskāmāqabir* falls in love with 'her unequal' tutor, a deacon called Bezabih, the affair became a subject of gossip; similarly, as Etsegenet of *Filmiya*, the youngest daughter of Tafesse, falls in love with the deacon, Gashaw, who was a family tutor, the people around her got a topic for gossip. (In addition to this, there are other resemblances between the two novels: both Tafesse and Meshesha have the feudal rank of Fitawrari; both govern their people cruelly: they jail and whip people that they consider are trouble makers; peasants rebel against both Meshesha and Tafese; Tafese of *Filmiya* died during the night of the wedding day, while Meshesha of *Fiqir Īskāmāqabir* and his wife died on the eve of the wedding day of Seblewongel).

Why did both authors choose female characters that fall in love with their unequals, and end their novels with the death of the antagonistic characters, the two Fetawrari? Perhaps, the authors wanted to ironically ridicule the feudal lords for their evil and chauvinistic idea of bloodline.

The representation of bloodline in the novels is very credible, because it was a common experience in the country that most aristocrats and feudal lords did not voluntarily give their daughters in engagement to non aristocrats at that time. *Filmiya* represents the politics of inequality and bloodline that existed, after the fall of the Imperial period, while *Ariaya*, *Aliwālādīm* and *Adāfirīs* showed them contemporarily, during the period. *Filmiya* represents the politics overtly, while the other novels represent it both overtly and covertly. In *Ariaya* the dialogue between the old

aristocrat and Araya represents inequality overtly, while the actions of the characters represent the situation covertly. *Adäfiris* reflects the politics of inequality both overtly and covertly through the dialogue of the characters and the size of the dialogue (the paragraph) of the characters and their turn takings (*Adäfiris*, 1970: 6 - 12; Fekade, 1998). *Aliwäälädim* on the other hand, represents the theme through dialogues and actions of characters. *Filmiya* uses implicit intertextuality as a means of representation of the politics of inequality. New Historicism and System Theory believe that intertextuality is a common phenomenon of every text, and that intertextual reading is necessary in understanding literary discourses (Johnson, 1993: 14, 17; Wodak and Mayer, 2001: 16-17). Thus, a reading of the novels above shows a consistent discourse as far as the theme of inequality is concerned

Ethnic groups in Ethiopia are represented in different ways by the novels. For instance, the Rayana Azebo people are categorized as looters and bandits who rob the retreating Ethiopian soldiers and patriots (The Rayas were not in good terms for some time with the central government, for historical reasons (Bahru, 2002a: 157)). Likewise, in the novel, *Ariaya*, the protagonist, in his conversation with other patriots tells his suspicion that other ethnic groups who live in some other parts of Ethiopia might not threat the Amhara patriots well for the former had been ruled by the forefathers of the latter (1968: 301, see p. 95).

The narrator further describes that the Harrar Oromos (the ‘Kotus’) are reluctant to work unless they ‘chew’ “chat” (a kind of stimulant leaf) late morning (1968: 211 - 212). The narrator commented this after observing the behaviour of some members of the ethnic group during the construction of Araya’s house.

In the novel, *Adäfiris*, the Adal people are sometimes looked down by the characters, Gorfu and Tsione, for they butter their head and body, and it is noted that they sometimes clash with the neighbouring Amhara people for various reasons (1970: 19-20, 238, and 247). In one instance, Tsione says the following to Gorfu, an Amhara character: “አዳል ለመግደል ራሳ መውረድህን ሰምቻለሁ” [I heard that you went to Rasa to kill Adal people (p.19)). Tsione said this because, Gorfu was not around for sometime and to indicate that she knew he left his village now and then to kill Adal people which was considered to be a sign of courage, a common experience in the area. Gorfu in another context also says, “አዳል ሲባሉ ያው አዳል ናቸው፤ ተመልሰው ቅቤያቸውን ሊነኩሩ፤ ...

ደግሞኮ እሽት እሽት አያደርጉትም...” [The Adal people are always the same Adal; they bath and rub their body again with butter (p. 238)], in his conversation with Tsione at a place called Robit, where Tsione and her mother, Asegash, went for hot spring treatment).

The politics of inequality, bloodline and ethnicity are not the main concerns of these novels. However, are presented as minor issues in the novels in different contexts for different reasons. They are more or less represented realistically as they are also confirmed and described in some historical and other literary and non literary texts (Berihun, 2000; Bahru, 2002a; Teklehawariyat, 2007). Some of the novels like *Ariaya* and *Adäfiris* represent the events contemporaneously while *Baša Qitaw* reflects them in the post contemporaneous period of the events.

What are interesting with regard to the representations of inequality, bloodline and ethnicity in the novels are the characters that are used as mouthpieces and the narrators. Though they condemn ethnic chauvinism and slavery (*Baša Qitaw*, 1983: 20 - 23), they seem to be adding to the problems, without their conscious intents. For instance, the protagonist character, Araya, blames the Harar Oromos in general for their habit of chewing chat which prevents them from doing work. However, it is wrong to blame the whole community just because a few individual are addicted to it.

In another context, the character, Araya, though preaches unity among the different ethnic groups, he reveals his suspicion of some non Amhara groups in that they might be easily cheated by the Italian propaganda and could be obstacles to the Amhara patriots (1968: 300, see p. 95). This actually seems to reflect a chauvinistic position of the character. It is obvious that the non Amharas had also defended their country courageously.

Eventhough Adefris seems to be progressive, he in reality, has some wrong conceptions. He pushes his lover, Roman, to prostitution. He also accuses her saying “ስትናዝር ቆይታ” (“sītnazir qoyīta”), which literally means “she lived for some time in prostitution” (1970: 322). He further insults her as a maid that is not equal to others: “ምኔ ነች ... እሷ፤ ገረድ...ነች፤ በቃ...ገረድ!” (“mine näč ...ῑsu^wa; gāräd ...näč...bäqa ... gāräd!”) [After all she is nothing to me. She is a . . . maid. . . Really .

. . she is a maid]. The reason for the chauvinistic personality of Adefris as has been lastly observed in insulting Roman, and the difficulty of classifying him as a revolutionary student could be that he was, as previously discussed, from the feudal background. Therefore, his habitus may not allow him to participate actively in the student movement, and to accept Roman as equal to him.

There is also a similar thing that is reflected in Araya's personality. Araya, an educated and civilized man, was the son of a “ነፍጠኛ” (“näfit’äña”) (rifle man) who was sent to Harerge province to serve under Ras Mekonen (the father of Emperor Haileselassie) who was assigned to develop and administer the area. Araya grew in Harrar in Ras Mekonen's family. In spite of his education, however, it seems that his personality was influenced by the family and the environment habitus in which he grew and this made him suspicious of some other ethnic groups as threats to Amhara patriots (1968: 300, see the discussion on pp.94 – 95); he also considered the Harerge Oromos²¹ as less committed to work (1968: 212) as read in the following extract:

እነዚህ ቆቴዎች እንደዚህ ሰነፎችና ዳተኞች የሆኑበትን ምክንያቱን ለማወቅ ቢመረምር ከተፈጥሮ ስንፍናና ካስተዳደግ ከልማድም ጭምር ከመሆኑ በላይ ይህ የሚበሉት የጫት ቅጠልና ምግባቸውም አንደኛው ምክንያት መሆኑን ለመረዳት ይቻላል፡፡

[If one investigates why the Qotu people are lazy and clumsy in work, it is possible to understand that it is a result of the Chat that they chew and their feeding habits, in addition to natural laziness and the manner in which they are grown.]

Such attitudes that Ariaya has developed on other ethnic groups his consideration of the “Qotu” people as lazy result from his habitus; from his surroundings and his family. For Bourdeau (Dubois, J., Emery, M. & Sing, P., 2000: 90), family and environment, training and other experiences have significant influence in shaping the individual. That is why Adefris and Araya unconsciously fall back on their class and/or ethnic interest.

²¹ It is the word “qotu” rather than the ‘Harerge Oromo’ used in the novel. The researcher used the latter phrase for the first is derogatory.

4.2.2.3. Relationships between Religion and State

The Ethiopian Orthodox Church and the monarchy have been interdependent throughout history. Since most of the kings were followers of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, the church was made to serve the state. In reward, the church was made to have its own land and serfs who live on ploughing the church's land and paying tribute. Even when the numerous fees and labour service that peasants gave to landlords were abolished by the new law in Haileselassie's period, "the church was exempted from the abolition order" (Bahru, 2002a: 193). This is in line with the ideas of New Historicism, which states that "even the dictator of a small country doesn't wield absolute power on his own. To maintain dominance, his power must circulate in numerous discourses, for example, in the discourse of religion (which can promote belief in the "divine right" of kings or in God's love of hierarchical society)". (Tyson, 2006: 285),

The novel, *Adäfiris*, represents the existence of the relationship between religion and politics in the period of Haileselassie. The church is represented by the two priests, Father Addise and Father Yohannes. As a priest, Addise, the father confessor of the landlady, Asegash, is expected to treat people fairly, irrespective of their social and economic status; he is expected to teach his spiritual children the right path of Christianity. As a father confessor he should also criticize his 'spiritual children' when they get away from the path. On the contrary, Addise does not have the courage to tell Asegash her wrongs and criticize for her oddities; rather, he is seen to be her mouthpiece. He echoes the feelings and thoughts of Asegash. Even though he is a poor priest, he denies the equality of people, just like Asegash. Moreover, he deliberately misinterprets the words of the Bible in order to support and give religious ground to the ideology of Asegash. It was earlier referred that Addise, during the conversation with Adefris on the topics of equality, supported Asegash's idea of inequality and referred to Mark (7: 17): "but Jesus said unto her, let the children first be filled: for it is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it unto the dogs") to justify her idea.

Regarding the relationship between religion and state politics of Ethiopia, Ato Tiso, the judge, in conversation with Adefris explains thus (1970: 73 – 74):

ኢትዮጵያ የምታምነው በሰማያዊና በምድራዊ በመንፈሳዊና በስጋዊ ሃይል በጎለበተ እንደሰለሞን ባለ መሪ ነው። ለዚህ ነው አርማችንም “ሞአ አንበሳ ዘእምነገደ ይሁዳ” የሚል። ስለዚህ እስክቅርብ ጊዜ ድረስ የቤተክህነታችን ሥልጣን በግብጻውያን ተይዞ ስለነበረ በውነትም የመንግስቱና የቤተክህነቱ ስልጣን ሁለት የተከፈሉ መስለው ነበር። ዛሬ ግን ሁለቱ ሥልጣናት አንድ ሆነዋል። ማንኛውም ነዋሪ ነው የምንለው የሀገር መታወቂያ ሳይንሱም ሆነ ሃይማኖቱ ፍልስፍናውም ሆነ ኪነቱ ከልማዱ ከወጉና ከቅሪቶቹ ጋር በመዋሃድ በመሪው ሰብዕና አድሮ . . . ከዚያም እያንጸባረቀ መታየት ይኖርበታል ማለት ነው። (ገጽ 73) . . .

ንጉሥ የነዚህ ሁሉ ጥሩ ነገሮች ማንጸባረቂያ ከሆነ የቤተክህነቱም ጥሩ ነገሮች ማንጸባረቂያ ነው ማለት ነው። እና በዚህ መሰረት የቤተክህነት ነዋሪ ሥልጣን በንጉሱም ስለሚገለጽ ምድራዊ ስልጣኑ ጋር ተዋህዶ አንድ ሆኗል ማለት ነው።

[Ethiopia worships in a leader like Solomon who is strong enough both in spiritual and worldly matters. That is why our insignia says “Conquering Lion of the Tribe of Judah”. Until recently, since our church was under the Egyptians, the power of the church and the state seemed to be separated into two. Today these powers are united into one. Every popular science, religion, and philosophy in which the country is identified with must be mixed with its traditional values that are inculcated in the heart and mind of the leader, and shine. ...If all these values exist within the mind and soul of the king, he is supposed to be the reflector of all values of the church. Therefore, if the power of the church is revealed by the king, it can be said that the two powers have been united into one.]

This extract makes it a point that the state and the church are inseparable.

In *Aliwäladim*, religion’s relationship to state politics is revealed through the controversies between characters and priests of different churches, on the issue of a burial place for the hero character who is sentenced to death. All the priests reject the burial of the body of the hero character in their grave yards, labelling him as a heathen (2001: 233). Unlike the priests, the ordinary people that come to mourn the hero’s death are sympathetic to him (2001: 216). The priests show their loyalty to the government by forbidding the burial of the body in their respective church yards.

In principle, the church is supposed to be the shelter of the poor, but in practice, it deprives people the right services and serves the monarchy and the feudal lords. That is why the peasant Tsedu in the novel, *Filmiya*, blames the church (2009: 60):

ወደ ቤተክርስቲያን ገብተህ ደወል ደውለህ ብሶትህን እንዳትተነፍስ እግዚአ ፍረዱኝ እንዳትል የትኛው ካህን ደፍሮ ሊገዝትልህ! ቁሶች የጌቶቹን ትዕዛዝ

ለማስፈጸም እንጂ የቆሙለትን የእግዚአብሔር ዓላማ ለማስፈጸም አቅሙም የላቸውም። በጌቶቻቸው ቁራሽና ፍርፋሪ የሚኖሩ ከእነሱው ደጅ የማይጠፉ የሁለት መንግስት አገልጋዮች ናቸው።

. . . እንዲያውም በእግዚአብሔርና ሰዎች መካከል ገብቶ ሰውን ከእግዚአብሔር የሚያስታርቅ ባለአደራ ነው። ቁሶቻችን ለዚህ መች ታደሉ? የበሉበትን ጌታና የንጉሠ ነገስቱን ስም እየጠሩ የሰማይ ቤታቸውን በውክልና የሚያስፈጽሙ እንጂ ለዚህ ሁሉ ተሰብስቦ ለተበደለና ሀብቱንና ንብረቱን በግፍ ለሚነጠቅ ድሀ መቼ ቆመው ያውቃሉ?

[Even if you ring the bell in the church yard, no one will respond to your call for help, because the priests do not have the moral to stop criminals; rather they are instruments for them. *Priests are servants of two masters* who live for their stomach (emphasis mine).

. . . Priests have the responsibility to mediate between man and God. Our priests are not fortunate in this regard. They live to favour and praise the Emperor and the lords rather than argue and stand for the poor.]

These relationships of the religious institutions and the monarchy are proof to the existence of systematic relationships among different fields (Boschetti, 2006: 145; Webb, Sxhirato & Danaher, 2002: x - xi). In this regard, the political field is interrelated to the field of religion and vice versa

4.2.2.4. The Growing Oppositions and the Coup

Due to the deteriorating economic and political situations of the country, and the unfair production relationships between landlords and peasants and factory workers and owners, and the deprivations of basic democratic and human rights, students, workers and peasants showed their resistance to the Haileselassie government in different forms.

Beginning from the early 1960s, students have expressed their dissatisfactions through demonstrations demanding for democratic and civil rights and crying for “land to the tiller” (Bahru, 2002a: 220 - 226; Balsvik, 2005: 71 - 311; Bahru, 2010). The student movements expanded from tertiary schools to secondary and junior schools, and from city schools to the far remote district schools. This unrest annoyed the government and the landlords (Bahru, 2002a, 2010; Balsvik, 2005).

There is some representation of the student movement in *Adäfris*. In a conversation held between Asegash and Gorfu, the disapproval of university students to the

Emperor's system of administration is raised (1970: 172). Both characters are not interested in the student movement, because Gorfu had told Asegash rumours about the opposition of the university students, which obviously cannot make the landlady happy.

On the other hand, Adefris and Kibret, in their conversation about the demonstration that they were watching from the bar where they were drinking reflect different positions regarding the movement. Kibret does not support the demonstration as he considers it nonsense. But, Adefris seems to support it and criticizes Kibret for the position he holds because he believes that there were good things in what the student demonstrators were demanding (1970: 293-294). In the story, there was another demonstration at which Adefris died after being hit with a stone thrown by somebody (1970: 325) perhaps by Gorfu, for the latter was involved in dispersing the student demonstrators. This might be Gorfu's revenge on Adefris for he lost his girl, Tsione, because of Adefris. Students were earnest in their demands for change in the political administration, the production relations, for democratic rights and other related issues. The government and aristocrats as well as the landlords/landladies were worried by this resistance of the students and other progressive bodies (Bahru, 2002a: 220 - 226).

Like the students, peasants also showed resistance in different parts of the country. The Gojam, Tigray, Bale and Arsi peasants rebelled at different times (Bahru, 2002a, 215-220). Individual peasants become conscious of the persistent exploitation and they show resistances in different forms.

Such resistance of peasants towards their respective landlords and governors is reflected in the novels, *Adäfiris* and *Filmiya*. In *Adäfiris* (1970: 6 - 12), Asegash blames the nameless peasant for he does not allow her to rule him like she did in the past. Peasants become aware of the exploitation and show their resistance in different forms. Asegash is aware of this. That is why she bitterly criticizes her tenant when he asks her for a loan of grain seeds. She criticizes him that he has changed his character; that he does not respect her like the golden old days. Asegash knew that the peasant no longer wanted to work for her like he did in the old days (1970: 8-9).

The novel, *Filmiya* (2009: 49-127), also portrays this resistances of peasants against landlords through the experiences of the characters, Tsedu and Sentayehu. As

previously discussed, though Tsedu dropped his plan of killing the landlord Meshesha, Sentayehu (Tsedu's son) took revenge against the men of Meshesha (2009: 40 - 41). It is such kinds of rebellions that provoked the higher better organized apprisings of the Tigray, Gojam and Bale peasants in the period of Haileselassie (Bahru, 2002a: 215-220)

The student movement and peasant rebellions are, in general, represented in the novels in an overt and plausible way, in spite of the small coverage of the topics. Compared to *Adäfiris, Filmiya* (2009: 49 - 119, 155 - 168, 213 - 232) represents the rebellions of peasants and the struggles of workers more realistically because it was written in the post contemporaneous period of the event.

Different coups were attempted in the period of Haileselassie (Berihun, 2000: 707-725; Bahru, 2002a: 209 - 215, 228 - 235). Among these, the 1960 and the 1974 coups are significant. Even though coup is a significant event in the novel, *Aliwäladim*, there are no explicit references made to real history, political event, persons, time and places of the country in the story. The author, Abe, states in the preface to the first edition of the novel that the novel does not specifically deal with the politics of this or that country. Abe uses fictional setting and nameless characters. The fictional setting is a country called "Iyiziraelos" and its capital city is "Aqaniya". Most of the characters - the hero character, his mother and the doctor are nameless. This is one way of escaping censorship imposed by undemocratic governments. This has an impact on the content and manner of representations of intended themes. If censorship had not been institutionalized by the then government, the author might have written his novel differently; he could use real setting and characters so that the novel could objectively indicate the real problems of the country and the possible solutions.

Though the author claimed that the story was not based on the experiences of a single definite country or people, as a sensitive and change seeker Ethiopian, he could not ignore the social and political realities of the country. He obviously knew about the different coups attempted against the Emperor, especially the 1960 coup attempted by General Mengestu and his brother Germame Neway (this issue of the 1960 coup attempt is reflected in the post contemporary novel called *Anguz*, 1992, by Tsehay Melaku). Moreover, Abe could not be unaware of the economic, social and political problems of the period. The author had realized the evils of the government of

Haileselassie even before he became a journalist; in fact, the profession sharpened him very much (2001: 6).

Therefore, the political, economic, and social problems reflected in the novel could not but be the reflections of the objective realities of Ethiopia. In Haileselassie's time, as previously discussed in detail, Ethiopia faced severe problems of corruption, inequality, domination, poverty, deprivation of human and democratic rights, serfdom, small wage, unemployment, and poor working conditions and living environment. As a journalist, Abe could not fail to understand the existence of all these miseries. The Haileselassie government was also aware that the novel was a commentary on the then politics, and that should be why the author was penalized severely (Elias, 1999: 20, 24).

Abe represents the historical and political events of Ethiopia using tropes: symbols and biblical allusions (2 Kings, 9). The setting, "Iyizraelos", represents Ethiopia. Although, Abe's setting, "Iyizraelos" is fictional, it is likely that it was taken from the Bible, from a city in Israel called "Iyizrael" (the Geez version), (Jezreel). According to the story, there was maladministration in Jezreel. The king, Akab (Ahab) and his wife, Elzabel (Zebabel), cruelly ruled the people. Murder and corruption were widespread. Rulers seized the fertile land of the ordinary people if they were interested in them (like Tafesse did in the novel, *Filmiya*, see 4.2.2.1). Zebabel, for instance, murdered prophets. She murdered the owner of a wine farmland just because he was not willing to exchange with or sell his land to Ahab voluntarily. Ahab insisted that the farmer had to either sell the wine farmland to him, or exchange it with another fertile land; but, the farmer resisted for he inherited the land from his family. Zebabel was angry at this, and ordered her men to kill the owner of the wine land. God was angry at such kinds of evil deeds of Ahab and Zebabel; it became the will of God to let Jehu become strong against Ahab; he killed and took Ahab's power as God wanted to avenge the blood of His prophets.

The corrupted state of Ahab, his government, and the country "Iyizraelos" possibly represent the state of Haileselassie, his government and Ethiopia respectively. Jehu could be a prediction of the coming of the Darg, which ruled for 17 years after Haileselassie. As Jehu broke the order of God for his own political advantage and became responsible for the death and suffering of the Jezreels, Mengestu (the Darg

leader) abused the revolution for his own benefits. Mengestu killed Haileselassie and other former officials, and his rivals because of his lust for power (Bahru, 2002a: 238 - 239). Therefore, Abe described the historical and political situation of the Haileselassie regime and predicted the coming to power of the Darg by making an analogy to the Biblical story of Jezreel, Ahab and Jehu. In fact, Abe also makes an overt reference to the story of Akab (Ahab) and his wife, Elzabel (Zebabel) in the novel (2001:130- 131); and such a reference intended to show the politics of Ethiopia.

The novel also deals with the post independent situations of Iyizraelos. The people of Iyizraelos first suffered in the hands of the colonial power, and then hoped for better life in the post-independence periods. Unfortunately, that hope failed under the rule of the aristocrats. Like Iyizraelos, Ethiopia became independent after defeating the Italians. Following that, the people hoped for better life; but, that hope could not last long because of the widespread corruption, maladministration and inequality in the country.

The hero also seems to symbolize Jesus. As Jesus taught and saved the people, the hero teaches people, and shows them the roads to freedom; as Jesus was chased by Judas, the hero is chased by the officials of the government of Iyizraelos; as Jesus was accused of his teachings, the hero is also accused of his teachings and principles; as Jesus was crucified, the hero is also shot to death by the order of the court. The hero character is conscious of this correspondence to Jesus. He believes that Jesus is his model; he believes that he is a man of truth; he battles against evils; he is charged and destined to death as he strives for the well-being of the people²². The analogy of

²² The hero character not only relates his good deeds to the deeds of Jesus; but also makes his style of speech like that of Jesus: he uses rhetorical questions, he directly addresses his narratees, the priests, officials and the soldiers in second person point of view and he answers himself without waiting for them. In short, the tone and style of his speech is imitation of Jesus (Luke, 5, 39-45; 11, 17-23; 37-44) as it is observed in the following extract from the novel (2001: 226 – 227):

ስለፍቅር መልካምነት ታወቅላችሁ። ፍቅርን የሚያጎሳቁል ጠብ ትፈጥራላችሁ። የሕዝብን መብት ትገፋላችሁ። አዲሶቹ ገዢዎችም ያለፈውን ያገዛዝ ዓይነት ትካቅፋላችሁ። ከድሮው በበለጠ ከባድ አገዛዝ ህዝብን ታስቃያላችሁ። ነገሥታትና መሳፍንት ይለብሱት የነበረውን በወርቅ የተንቆጠቆጠ ልብስ ትረግማላችሁ፤ እራሳችሁ ደረታችሁንና ትከሻችሁን እስኪከብዳችሁ ድረስ የወርቅ ጌጣጌጦችን ትሸከማላችሁ፤ ወዮላችሁ! ተራ ህዝብ ለሆናችሁ ወገኖቼ! በጡንቻውና ባበጠ ቦርሳው የሚመካ ሁሉ ለባርነት ለሚያጫችሁ ምስኪኖች ወዮ! እናንተ ህዝቦች እውነቱን ልንገራችሁ! ያለፈውን ለመንቀፍና ያለውን ለማመስገን ያገኛችሁትን እድል እንደ እድገት አትቁጠሩት፤ አዲሱ ጠቃሚ መስጧችሁ ሳትቆረጥሙ አትዋጡት። ሁሉንም መርምራችሁ እውነተኛውን ዋጋ ስጡ (226 - 227)። . .

[You talk about the goodness of love. You instigate problems that threaten love. You deprive the rights of people. You, the new rulers blame the old regime; but you suppress the people more than the old regime did. You abhor the clothes of kings and princes that are decorated with gold; but, you wear gold ornaments that are too heavy to your chest and shoulder. Alas, the ordinary people of my type! The strong and the rich whose purses are full of money wish to make you slaves. You people! May I tell you the truth! Don't consider the chance that you got to blame the past and appreciate the present as a mark of progress. Don't swallow the new without chewing it well first. Examine everything and then give it the right value.]

the story with the Bible is perhaps a result of the habitus of the author's church education (2001: 214 - 215, 219).

Abe wrote and published the novel during Haileselassie's period and represented the political events of the government contemporaneously. That is why he was detained regardless of his implicit representations of the political events. He also predicted the politics of the Darg eleven years prior to the real coming to power of the government (Ghirmai, 1995: 152; Elias, 1999: 17). While the contemporaneous representation of the politics of the Haileselassie government may not be surprising, how the writer was able to forecast the politics of the Darg in advance is astonishing.

Abe predicted the politics of the Darg may be because he was able to understand the objective reality of the country. Readers are informed (in the introduction of the novel) that he had knowledge of the experiences of some countries of Latin America, Asia and Africa where transitions of governments were made through coups, and the objective political reality of the government of Haileselassie. He knew that decadent states that are not willing to pass their power to people are thrown through coup, just like the Emperor was not willing to pass the power to his heirs or to people's government. There were also prior experiences of coups attempted by Takele Woldehawariyat, Negash Bezabih, Mengestu and Germame Neway (two brothers) before the publication of the novel. Abe's knowledge of these situations helped him forecast a government change through coup. Hence, these were the possible reasons that helped Abe predict the politics of the Darg in advance.

4.2.2.5. Factors that led to the 1974 revolution

Several authorities believed that the 1974 revolution was spontaneous since there were no organized political groups that were capable of leading the revolution. There were no organized political movements that were believed to bring about a change of system in the country. The revolution was instigated rather by common strikes by different divisions of the army. The change seekers, like the students and the intelligentsia were not conscious about it (2002a: 228). It was the demand for quality ration and for salary increment raised by the army that were used as pretexts for the eruption of the revolution.

Although the revolution seemed to be spontaneous, there were different factors that paved the way for it. As discussed so far, there were problems related to democracy, production relationships, equality, humanity, corruption, land, education and modernization. Students, peasants and workers showed their discontents at different times, in different ways. Students and workers demonstrated from time to time raising different questions at various levels; they even went to the extent of hijacking Ethiopian Air lines, so that their voice could be heard by the international community (Bahru, 2002a: 220 – 226 & 2010; Balsvik, 2005). Peasants expressed their objections legally by appealing to different government officials at different levels and illegally by making rebellions both individually and in groups (2002a: 215 - 220). The army and other civilians also attempted different coups at different times (2002a: 209 - 226). Haileselassie celebrated his 80th birth day ceremony allocating a huge amount of money, while the Wollo and Tigray people were starving to death because of the 1973 famine (Balsvik, 2005: 303; Berihun, 2000: 1261 - 1280). These and other related factors contributed to the eruption of the revolution.

Berhanu represented the revolution in his novels, *Maibäl Yabiyot Wazema* (1979) and *Maibäl Yabiyot Mäbača* (1981) after the revolution. The first volume reflects problems related to land, landlords and peasants, the 1973 famine, the migration of the Wollo people, and the oppositions of the military, workers and students to the government. More space is given to the famine in Wollo and the land holding system. These issues are reflected in nearly all chapters of the novel. The movements of the different sections of the armed forces are also reflected in the last chapter of the novel.

As regards the movement of the army, the revolt of the Negele Borona soldiers, the support that the Ethiopian air force showed to the Negele Borona soldiers, the control of the Asmara radio station by the army and the agitation that they made are represented in the novel through the narrator and the dialogues of student characters (1979: 272 - 273). The rise in fuel prices and the consequent strike of taxi drivers, the objection of teachers to the new educational policy, and the students' demonstrations are the other representations in the novel (1979: 273; 1981: 3 - 10).

The last months of the eruption of the revolution marked by the resignation of the old (Aklilu) cabinet and its replacement by the new (Endalkachew) cabinet, the rejection of the people, the appeal of the Endalkachew cabinet for 'time', the formation of the

military committee and its coming to power are also represented in the second novel called *Maibäl Yabiyiyot Mäbača*.

The representations of the events are mainly overt, because the novels are written and published in the post contemporaneous period, five and seven years respectively, after the revolution. Fear of censorship did not seem to exist on the part of the author as the new government could use the novels to denounce the Haileselassie government. The representations of the historical and political events are plausible. The novels are based on real historical events as the author claims in the prefaces. However, there are some signs that the narrator is partial to the peasantry and the famine- stricken people, and to the new military government; there are some exaggerated and illogical events in the life of the fictional characters and the story which emanate from this partiality. (For instance, Zerfeshiwal (the landlady of Muhe) accidentally met Zeinu (the daughter of Muhe) when she was driving from Dessie to Addis Ababa, and employed her as her maid. Neither of them knew each other. Kassahun (Zeinu's husband, who was in Addis Ababa at that moment) saw Zeinu by chance as she entered the city in a car that belonged to the landlady. Months later, Zeinu met, by chance, the students who were helping Kassahun in finding her. All these are mere coincidences that take place to reflect the lives and experiences of the ruling class through the representation of the landlady in the eyes of Zeinu, and to reunite the separated husband and wife. This situation, in turn, reveals the ideology and the possible attitude of the author towards the revolution and the forces of the revolution.)

Although the Wollo famine happened in 1973, the novelist shifts the time deliberately to 1974 in order to relate the riots and the revolution to the famine (1979: preface). But in reality, though the Darg used the famine for the purpose of propaganda, the revolution exploded one year after the 1973 famine.

The novels use fictional names to represent the historical and political figures. For instance, Aklilu Habtewold, the prime minister who resigned from his position; Endalkachew Mekonen, the new prime minister who succeeded Aklilu; Mekonen Habtewold the brother of the first (former finance minister); and Colonel Alemzewd who was the relative of Endalkachew and leader of the national security council during the revolution are given fictional names as Akabe shum Gonte, Akabe shum

Gugsa, Shum Serabezu and Colonel Alemayehu respectively. But there are different hints that enable the readers to identify who these characters really represent.

4.3. Conclusion

This part presents a summary of the main points discussed in the chapter, and concluding remarks on the representations of the post-war political events in the selected novels. Nevertheless, it is inevitable that references have to be made to the pre-war period as well as both (chapters three and four) represent the analyses and interpretations of the politics of Haileselassie.

Based on the analyses and interpretations of the novels, it was found that the novels represented political events of the Haileselassie period positively and negatively. Unlike those novels that were published during Haileselassie's period, the post contemporaneous novels, *Baša Qit'aw*, *Filmiya* and *Maibäl Yabiyot Wazema* (that dealt with the politics of the Haileselassie government) did not include in them extr-textual information such as photographs of the Emperor and his family, and dedications of the novels to the birth day and the coronation day of the emperor. The inclusion of such information could indicate the interference of the politics in the literature. The authors, whether they liked it or not, were expected to include such information.

Agazi, (that was written and published contemporaneously) represented the politics of the period favouring the Emperor and his political system, while *Aliwäladim* degraded the politics and made its criticism implicitly. The contemporary novels that favoured the system made their representations overt, but the novels that did not favour the period represented the politics in tropes, fictional settings and characters, and wrote remarks stating, for example, that the story by any means does not have a direct link to any real experience or person; or appreciating the political period at surface level, while criticizing it implicitly by using different techniques such as word selection, characterization, story line, dialogue and turn taking, and also the size of the dialogues of the characters.

There was no novel written during the contemporaneous period that overtly represented the contemporary politics negatively with a serious tone. The novels (e.g. *Baša Qit'aw*, *Filmiya*, *Maibäl Yabiyot Wazema*) that were written and published after

the fall of the government boldly and explicitly undermined the government, because they did not have to worry about censorship, and were even useful for the new government's political propaganda.

Forecasting political events have also been observed in some novels. *Agazi*, for example, predicted the unification of Eritrea with Ethiopia some years before the actual event; Abe made predictions of a coup that would take place and the post-Imperial government, eleven years prior to the event, in *Aliwälädim*. The reason for this might be that the author clearly understood the real situations of the country.

Some novels seem to be pedagogic in their functions. *Ariaya*, for example, suggests the need for societal participation in electing their administrators, at least at sub district level, and the necessity of ensuring the right of the people to share the resources of the country. *Aliwälädim* emphasizes the importance of equality, democracy and education.

Many of the historical and political representations in the novels are, in one way or another, similar to the presentation made by historians. For instance, the different opinions that are reflected in the historical documents regarding the exile of Haileselassie are represented in the literary texts. Similar to what is found in historical documents, the literary works held different positions- some considered the exile of the king as a wise diplomatic move, while others considered it as a betrayal of the country. Some gave credit to the diplomatic effort of the king and the involvement of the British Army, while some others criticized the exile and supported the guerrilla fighting of the patriots. Therefore, it could be concluded that literary texts, like historical texts are interpretative (Ryan, 1996 cited by Milner and Browitt, 2002: 44-48; Payne, 2005: 3).

According to New Historicism, the time in which the novel is produced has an effect on the literary discourse (Brannigan, 2001: 169 - 170). This is witnessed in some of the Amharic novels. For instance, in *Bašha Qitaw*, the discourse on the exile of the Emperor is an overt criticism of the act, because the novel was published after the fall of the regime. Such a discourse would not have been possible, if the novel was written during the Emperor's period.

Literary discourses do not only reflect history, according to New Historicism, but play important role in shaping history. As authors are shaped by context, they also shape the context (Bertens, 2001: 166 - 167; Brannigan, 2001: 169 - 170). This is what we observe in the Amharic novels. For instance, the novel, *Aliwälädim*, does not only reflect the evils of the government of Haileselassie, but also suggests solutions. It reflects how action must be taken to bring about change in the production relationships of the society and the government system. The novel also contributes to shaping the readers, by at least, creating awareness about the evils of the Imperial government. It instigates workers to fight for their rights and freedom. Moreover, it is likely that the thoughts reflected in the novel made people join the revolution.

All the three critical theories applied in this study are instrumental in revealing the concealed power relationships that existed between the different social groups in the texts. The theories hold the assumption that power differences are always embedded in discourses, as has been revealed in the interpretation of the Amharic novels. For example, like most historical documents, most of the literary texts were engaged with the story of the ruling class, the king and the warlords, rather than the ordinary patriots who courageously fought for their country. It is the story of Haileselassie, Ras Mulugeta, Ras Kassa or Ras Emiru that is told, rather than that of the ordinary soldiers. It is the Maychew front that the Emperor led which was narrated, instead of the many other northern fronts that were led by lower officials. Almost all the novels that dealt with events before the Emperor's exile passed through the same routes that the Emperor travelled. That is why the novels are limited to the northern war fronts, though there were other fronts in the southern and south-eastern provinces of the country.

The power relationships that existed between landlords and peasants, masters and servants, government officials and ordinary citizens, employers and employees and between ethnic groups are explicitly identified in the novels. For instance, the unhealthy relationships between landowners and peasants are revealed through the lady characters, Asegash and Zerfeshiwal and their respective peasants in the novels, *Adäfris* and *Maibäl Yabiyot Wazema*, respectively.

Power is not unidirectional for Bourdeau; it is rather bi directional (Foucault, 1980 as paraphrased by Tyson, 2006: 284 - 285). This means that the ruled, the oppressed, and

the servants do not passively subdue to domination. They show some kinds of resistance. Such instances are observed in the novels. In *Ariaya* and *Baša Qitaw*, it is observed that the Ethiopian people did not welcome the invasion of the Italian forces, and therefore engaged themselves in guerrilla warfare to restore their freedom. The rebellions of peasants, the strikes of workers, the revolt of students and workers, insurrection of the armed divisions against the Haileselassie government that have been represented in the novels are some of the actions against the rulers.

For Fairclough and other CDA proponents, power is revealed through language. Language provides a finely articulated means to show differences in power, in social hierarchical structures (Wodak, 2002: 10). Some words and phrases found in the novels revealed power relationships. In *Ariaya*, for instance, the author dedicates the novel to the restoration of the Emperor's throne, and in his closing statement he uses the phrase “ቅን አገልጋይ” (“Qin agäligayïwo”) [your loyal servant]. This is a straight forward indication of the imbalance of power relationships (a master-servant relationship) between the Emperor and other officials. The biblical allusions in *Agazi* also reveal the loyalty of the author to the Emperor.

Finally, it should be stressed that the analyses and interpretations made on the novels with the help of the New Historicism, Bourdeau's System Theory and Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis, enabled to identify the representations of the political events, and the manners and patterns in which they were represented. The study further showed the mutual influence between context and literature.

Chapter Five

Analyses and Interpretations of Representations of the Politics of the Darg Period (Feb. 1974 – May 1991) in Selected Amharic Novels:.

5.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the analyses and interpretations of the representations of politics of the Darg government (see sub chapter 2.2.2.2.) in selected Amharic novels. The chapter has two parts – the discussion and conclusion.

The novels for this topic are *Maibäl Yabiyot Mäbača* (1981) and *Maibäl Yabiyot Magist* (1983) by Berhanu, *Yäqäy Kokob T'irri* (1980) and *Oromay* (1983), by Bealu, *T'amra T'or* (1983) by Gebeyehu, and *Anguz* (1992) by Tsehay. The first two novels have been selected as they extensively deal with the politics of the Darg up to the 1980s i.e. politics related to the eruption of the revolution, the coming of the Darg to power, the rule of the Darg (its guidelines and major activities). *Yäqäy Kokob T'irri* was selected because it mainly deals with the important event of “Red Terror”, while *Oromay* is selected as a critique that fully treats the ‘Red Star Multifaceted Revolutionary Campaign’. *T'amra T'or* is one of the few literary canonical novels that deal with the Somali invasion. The novel was read on the Ethiopian national radio. Tsehay’s *Anguz* has been selected for the fact that it was written by a female writer and that it also deals with ‘Red Terror’. It was published in the post contemporary period.

5.2. Discussion

The political events represented in the selected novels are categorized into five parts: the eruption of the revolution and the rule of the Darg, competitions for power and the ‘Red Terror’, The Somali war, the Red Star Multifaceted Revolutionary Campaign, and various issues related to class composition, corruption, democracy and inequality during the Darg period.

Like the preceding two chapters, the analyses made in this chapter answer the research questions with respect to the given context. In other words, the analyses and interpretations identify what specific political events of the Darg period are represented in the novels? How these specific political events of the period are

represented? Which novels contemporarily represented the political events of the same period, and which ones represented political events that happened previously? How did the political contexts and the discourses of the novels influence one another during the Darg political period?

5. 2.1. The Eruption of the Revolution and the Darg

The eruption of the revolution sets out the rebellion of the army, the resignation of the cabinet of Prime Minister Aklilu Habtewold, and the formation of a new cabinet led by Prime Minister Endalkachew Mekonen, and the imprisonment of some officials of the Haileselassie government. Since these political events have already been discussed and analyzed in the previous chapter, they are given little space in this sub chapter.

The political events related to the eruption of the revolution are reflected in detailed and explicit manner in the novels, *Maibäl Yabiyot Wazema* and *Maibäl Yabiyot Mäbača. Yäqäy Kokob T'irri* (1980: 50-51) and *Anguz* (1992: 74-75) refer to the events in different ways, like, for example, providing background of characters and stories. Content wise, the represented political issues related to the eruption of the revolution in the selected novels (for this and the previous chapters) are more or less similar (see 4.2.3.2.5).

As previously mentioned, the Darg started to assume power in June 1974, after a committee representing forty different army sections found in various parts of the country was formed. In September 1974, the Darg overthrew Haileselassie and declared itself as the Provisional Military Administrative Council. Different persons had taken the position of the chairmanship of the Darg - Major Atnafu Abate, General Aman Andom, Brigadier General Teferi Benti - until the last person (later Colonel) Mengestu monopolized the position. The Darg was basically composed of junior military officers below the rank of Colonel (Gilkes, 1975: 20 - 21; Legum, 1977: 305; Marcus, 1994: 187; Bahru, 2002a: 234).

The guiding principle of the Darg was, “ኢትዮጵያ ትቅደም!” (“Itiyop’iya tiqädäm”), which literally means, “Ethiopia First!” Some Ethiopians, especially the elites, were not pleased with the political leadership of the Darg and the “Ethiopian First” motto it

promoted. These groups demanded for the formation of a provisional people's government, to which the Darg and some of its allied parties were not interested.

Once the Darg controlled the reins of power, it took different measures. Of the major ones, the 'Development through Cooperation Campaign' program was notable. The program was planned to send "high school and university students and their teachers to the countryside in order to implement various programs of rural development under the 'philosophy' of “ኢትዮጵያ ትቅደም!” (“Itiyyop’iya tiqidäm”), [Ethiopia First] (Marcus, 1994: 192; Bahru, 2002a: 240).

The Darg also took other important measures related to land issue. It nationalized urban land (Bahru, 2002a: 240). The new policy “permitted farming household's usufruct over as many as ten hectares” (Marcus, 1994: 192). It further nationalized private enterprises, financial institutions, and extra city houses. The Darg also founded Kebeles (urban dwellers associations) and farmers associations to bring its programs and policies down to earth (Marcus, 1994: 193; Bahru, 2002a: 243).

The left wing groups were propagating scientific socialism at that moment (Marcus, 1994: 193 - 194; Bahru, 2002a: 242 - 245). In reaction to the political pressure of the left wing groups, the Darg changed the motto from “ኢትዮጵያ ትቅደም!” (“Itiyyop’iya tiqidäm”), [Ethiopia First!] to “ህብረተሰባዊነት” (“hibirätäsäbawinät”) [Ethiopian Socialism]. In accordance to these situations, the Darg introduced the National Democratic Revolution program taken from the experience of China. The program was designed to lay the ground for the formation of socialism.

Some of these rapid changes in the politics of the Darg government are reflected in the novels, *Maibäl Yabiyot Mäbača* and *Maibäl Yabiyot Magist*. The novels reflect the coming to power of the military committee, its motto of “ኢትዮጵያ ትቅደም!” (“Itiyyop’iya tiqidäm”), the execution of the Emperor and other high ranking officials, the nationalization of land, private business enterprises and extra city houses, the Development through Cooperation Campaign, and the National Democratic Revolution programs. The Development through Cooperation Campaign program is represented in both *Maibäl Yabiyot Mäbača* and *Maibäl Yabiyot Magist*. For instance, it is the debate made between students who supported the campaign program and those who opposed it, and the ceremony held for the student campaigners are reflected

in *Maibäl Yabiyot Mäbača*. The farewell ceremony is described in the novel as follows (1981: 223):

የዘመቻው የደንብ ልብስ የሆነው ካኪ ቆብ፣ ሸሚዝና ሱሪ ለዘማቹ ልዩ ውበትና ግርማ ሞገስ ሰጥቶት ግማሹ ኮዳ አንግቶ ሌላው አካፋ፣ ዶማ፣ ማጭድ ይዞ ከዘመቻ መምሪያ ጽሕፈት ቤት በመነሳት በድል ሐውልት፣ በታላቁ ቤተ መንግስት በኩል ሲያልፍ የአዲስ አበባ ነዋሪ ሕዝብ በነቂስ ወጥቶ ተሰናበተው። መዝሙሩ፣ ዘፈኑ፣ ጭብጨባው ዕልልታው ቀለጠ። ብዙ ሰው የደስታና የኩራት ሕቅታ ተናነቀው። ብዙ የደስታ እንባ ፈሰሰ። የኃይለስላሴን መንግስት እያወገዙ ከጸጥታ አስከባሪዎች ጋር እየተጋጩ ባለፉበት አደባባይ “መሄዴ ነው ዘመቻ፣ መሄዴ ነው ገጠር” እያሉ በመዘመር እጃቸውን በኩራት ሲያውለበልቡ ማየት የደስታ ሲቃ የሚያሰዝ ነበር።

[The hat, shirt and trouser uniform made the campaigners graceful; some carried water pots and others were having farm tools as they started marching from the campaign central command and went through Victory Square and the Grand palace. Every resident of Addis Ababa came out to give farewell. There were songs, ululations and clappings. Many were in tears of joy. It was very interesting to hear them singing, “mähede näw zämäča mähede näw gät’äri” (I am going to the campaign, I am going to the rural districts). They said goodbye to the people waving their hands while walking along the main street where they used to clash with the police during their campaigns against the Haileselassie regime.]

The campaign then becomes one of the concerns of the trilogy and is reflected through the experiences of the student characters, Tarekegne, Marqos and Gebeyehu. The characters debate in order to reach consensus on the campaign; Gebeyehu does not support the campaign, while the other two support it. Marqos later changed his mind when he was in the campaign for the Development through Cooperation and joined Gebeyehu’s group that was at the time fighting against the Darg and its supporters (i.e. leaders of the peasant associations and campaigners). Tarekegne was killed by Gebeyehu’s group which did not support the campaign (1983: 137).

The motto of “Ethiopian Socialism”, is another issue that is raised in *Maibäl Yabiyot Mäbača* (1981: 222) about which the narrator says: “ኢትዮጵያ ወደፊት የምትመራበት ፖሊሲ የኢትዮጵያ ህብረተሰባዊነት ወይም ሶሻሊዝም ነው” [The policy that Ethiopia is going to follow in the future is Ethiopian Socialism] and discusses some of its basic principles.

Nationalization of land and extra city houses is also a major concern of the novels. One comes across some feudal characters who rebel because private ownership of land is abolished. Zerfeshiwal loses the land that the peasant characters, Muhe and Kassahun, have been ploughing. Like all other peasants, these peasant characters become the beneficiaries of the new policy. This issue is intertwined in all the stories in Berhanu Zerihun's trilogy.

Yäqäy Kokob T'irri touches topics related to the Development through Cooperation Campaign, nationalization of land and extra city houses and financial institutions, and the mottos “ኢትዮጵያ ትቅደም!” (“Itiyyop’iya tūqīdām”) (Ethiopia first!), and “ህብረተሰባዊነት” (“hībīrätäsābawināt”) (or Ethiopian Socialism) in connection with the background of characters. Development through Cooperation Campaign is discussed, although not broadly, in connection with two characters, Hirut and Teffera, who did not go to the campaign, perhaps because they were EPRP (an opposition party) members. The issue is further raised in the conversation that the characters had (1980: 46, 167). For instance Tefera says (1980: 46):

ሂሩት ወለላዬ እውነትሽን ነው! ማሰብ አለብን። ውስጠ አዋቂ ጠላት ነው እኮ የተፈጠረብን። አደገኛ ነው። ደርቤ ስለኛ የማያውቀው ምን ነገር አለ? ሁሉንም ነገር ያውቃል። ከእድገት በህብረት ዘመቻ ተደብቀን እንደ ቀረን ያውቃል። የትግል መስመራችን ምን እንደሆነ ከሀ እስከ ፕ ያውቃል።

[My dear Hirut, you are right! We have to think! Our enemy is an insider. The situation is very dangerous. Is there anything that Deribe does not know about us? He knows everything. He knows that we hid ourselves from the Development through Cooperation Campaign. He knows our political line from A to Z.]

The extract briefly reflects on the differences that occurred among individuals on the issue of the ‘Development through Cooperation Campaign’.

The issues of the nationalization of land and extra city houses are also discussed in some parts of the novel for different purposes – for characterization and story development. For instance, in connection with land ownership, we are told that the landlady, Amsale, lost 30 “gashas” (1200 hectares) of land that she had inherited from her parents (1980: 13, 102). Her extra house which had to be nationalized was saved because she converted the house into a hotel by bribing some officials (1980: 36-37).

There are no explicit references to historical and political figures like the old and the new ministers in Berhanu's trilogy. The narrator, rather, uses fictitious names (see chapter 4.2.3.2.5). But, periods like "Yekatit" (February) 1974, the month in which the revolution erupted, the day when the Emperor was compelled to step-down from his position, and the dates on which the nationalizations of land and extra city houses were announced to the people are correctly stated in the novels.

Representations of some historical events do not seem to be free from bias, because the narrators are clearly in favour of the military government, or the Darg. For instance, both EPRP and EDU, organizations that opposed the Darg, are represented as reactionaries, whose members were aristocrats and feudal lords who had lost their power, and whose attachments were to the former ruling class. Tefera, Hirut, Tessema and Laeke, who were the cell members of EPRP in *Yäqäy Kokob T'irri* are all presented as the children of feudal lords. Zerfeshiwal, Shewaye, the landladies, in the trilogy are shown to be the supporters of EDU.

The political events of the Haileselassie government are represented in the novels negatively, while those of the Darg are represented positively, favouring the Darg. There is no positive portrayal of political events related to the Haileselassie regime is observed in the novels. Conversely, no negative portrayal of the policy and programs of the Darg and the respective authorities are observed. These could have happened because of the influence of the censorship and the politics on the literature (Wa Thiong'o, 1981: 71; Zekye, n. d.: 62).

In *Yäqäy kokob T'irri*, some political events related to the revolution are represented in detail, while some others are under - represented. The power competitions among the different political groups and the Darg are contemporaneously reflected in detail at micro level, almost in all the thirteen chapters of the novel.

5.2.2. Competitions for Power and the Red Terror

As mentioned in the 'context of the study' (chapter 2.3.), the Darg was composed of mainly non commissioned officers who were experienced in military science, but ignorant of politics. However, through experience, they were able to gain political knowledge. After the removal of the Emperor, there were different political organizations which had different ideologies. EDU was a right wing political

organization, but the others belonged to the left wing. Among the left wingers, AESM, Malerid, EOPRS worked together with the Darg for ‘tactical’ reasons, while EPRP rigidly opposed the Darg and its allied left wing political parties. Both EPRP and AESM at first favoured the formation of “provisional people’s government”. However, the latter changed its position and allied itself with the Darg, and accused the EPRP for its position regarding peoples’ government, reasoning out that it was not time to demand provisional people’s government (Bahru, 2002a: 246 - 47).

Therefore, the Darg together with other allied parties fought against EPRP and EDU. Since EDU was not very much active in the cities, their main target was EPRP, which was conducting underground war in different major cities of Ethiopia. The war at first was ideological; but, after the assassination of Dr. Fiqre Merid (an important party member of the All Ethiopia Socialist Movement (AESM) that was allied to the Darg and who was also in charge of the Provisional Office for Mass Organizational Affairs (POMOA)) and the assassination attempt on Mengestu, the Darg declared ‘Red Terror’ against EPRP. The EPRP assassinated the members of AESM and workers of the Kebele associations. Since the Kebeles and the higher Kebeles were from the start founded to ‘safeguard the revolution’, the Red Terror became their main tool for revenge, and massacred tens of thousands of EPRP members (Marcus, 1994: 195 - 196; Bahru, 2002a: 247).

The allied parties formed a union called Union of Ethiopian Marxist Leninist Organization (Imaledeh, Amharic acronym) and worked together with the Darg. However, the union could not last for long because Mengestu, after he founded the political party called “Abiyotawi Sädäd”, began to eliminate member parties of the union. The first target among the member parties was AESM. The AESM was at that time calling for ‘unrestricted democratic rights now’, while the other member parties debated opposing the motto (Bahru, 2002a: 248). After AESM, EOPRS (Ič’iat, Amharic acronym) which was closely affiliated to “Abiyotawi Sädäd” was crushed. Then, Wäzlig (the Labour League) and Malerid were also crushed by Mengestu’s party, and some of their members were detained and others were killed (Marcus, 1994: 200; Bahru, 2002a: 248).

The power competitions between the Darg and some of its allied parties, and the Red Terror (Bahru, 2002a: 243, 247) are represented in almost all chapters of *Yäqäy*

Kokob T'irri, and the main story of the novel is related to these political events. The main setting of the story is very specific. The time does not exceed 24 hours, and takes place in Addis Ababa, mainly in the Kebele in which Deribe, Hirut and Amsale live. All the events, except the episodes in chapters six, nine and twelve are conducted in that specific Kebele. The setting of chapter one is Amsale's residence, during the night, where the scenes of psychological states of Amsale and Gulilat are revealed, following continuous gun shots that they heard from outside. Gulilat is worried about his children because of the gunshots, while, his wife, Amsale is angry at him because he couldn't understand her sexual desire perhaps due to frustration aroused because of the gun shots.

In that same night, the setting of chapter two shifts to the Kebele office where a meeting to select the chairman of the Kebele squad is held. In chapter three, on the same night, in the same kebele, the scene goes to Amsale's hotel where the two children of Amsale, Hirut and Tesema, and other members of one EPRP cell do some tasks assigned by their party. When we reach chapter seven, it is morning, in the residence of Amsale where they talk about the gunshots they heard the previous night, and their worry about their children. The setting of chapter eight is again in the Kebele office, on that specific morning where an interaction between the new chairman of the Kebele squad, Deribe, and four journalists takes place. Even the EPRP's zone office where Hirut, Laeke and Tefera are shot is found within that same Kebele. The novel revolves round the so called Red Terror and White Terror. It presents the deadly power struggle between the lower officials (at micro level, represented by Deribe and his Kebele colleagues from the government side; Wassihun, his Kebele colleagues and the four journalists from AESM side; Hirut, Laeke and Tefera from the EPRP side).

As the novel indicates, different parties have different slogans - These are 'Provisional people's government now', by EPRP, 'Democratic rights for the oppressed people now' by AESM, and 'Democratic rights in struggle for the oppressed people' by Mengestu's party Abeyotawi Seded (*Yäqäy Kokob T'irri*, 1980: 42 - 45, 153-155; Bahru, 2002a: 237, 248). Why did the novel focus on micro level administrative junctions (i.e. the Kebele level and a cell of the EPRP)? Why were the top management and leaders of the political groups not treated in the novel? One of

the answers to these questions might be that the Kebeles were considered to be the guardians of the revolution and were the main targets of the EPRP killing squads, and vice-versa. This situation is amplified by history as stated in Bahru (2002: 243) in the following way:

Just as the peasant associations helped the Darg to control the countryside, the urban dwellers' associations helped it to control the towns. In the months of bloody confrontation between the Darg and the EPRP, they became a veritable battle ground as EPRP militants targeted their leaders for assassination and the latter, and particularly members of what were known as the committees for the defence of the revolution, orchestrated the so called Red Terror against the EPRP.

Yäqäy Kokob T'irri reflects the political events in the contemporary years, within the Darg period itself. The 'White' and the 'Red Terrors' are especially reflected two years after the climax of the event. The novel represents EPRP, EDU and AESM negatively as anarchists, reactionaries, enemies of the revolution and power mongers, while it represents the Darg positively, as a revolutionary government. EPRP is characterized as an organization whose members are the children of feudal lords. For instance, Tsione and Tesema, as previously mentioned are the children of the landlady, Amsale. The cell leader, Laeke, is the son of one of the aristocrats who have been executed by the Darg government. Another character, Tefera is also the son of a feudal lord. AESM is especially represented as an imposter force that attempted to trick the Darg to ultimately seize power (1980: 224). *Yäqäy Kokob T'irri's* representation of the Darg as the leaders of the revolutionary state can be observed from what the protagonist, Deribe, says (1980: 224):

ለጊዜው የወሳኝ ፓርቲ ባይኖርም አብዮታዊ መንግስት አለ። አብዮታዊ መንግስት የለም፤ አብዮታዊ አመራር የለም የሚሉ ሰዎች ካሉ አቋማቸውን ግልጽ እንዲያደርጉ እፈልጋለሁ። እኔ በበኩሌ አብዮታዊ አመራር የሚለጥ አብዮታዊ መንግስት አለ ብዬ አምናለሁ።

[There is no workers party for the time being; however, there is a revolutionary government. People who believe that there is no revolutionary government and revolutionary leadership must make their position clear. On my part, I believe that there is a revolutionary government that gives revolutionary leadership.]

In *Yäqäy Kokob T'irri*, one comes across the intermingling of sex and politics. In the entire worrisome environment that Gulilat and his wife, Amsale are situated in, the

latter is seen trying to arouse the sexual interest of the former. Unfortunately, Gulilat does not respond accordingly, because he is preoccupied with the safety of his children hearing the continuous sound of gunshots from the nearby places. Under this circumstance, Amsale mocks at him saying he has lost his bravery, implying, on the one hand, as a feudal lord, he has lost courage to rebel against the Darg, and on the other, his inability to make love to her. It is a metaphoric language that she simultaneously uses to indicate the weakness of the feudal lords to fight the Darg and her husband's sexual impotence (1980: 2 - 18). Looking at it differently, Amsale's sex desire was high at that particularly worrisome moment, perhaps was a result of her unconscious intention to escape from stress. Stress usually has a hand in low libido like what happens to the husband, while it can also be a great stress reliever like what happens to the wife, Amsale (Elizabeth Scott, <http://stress.about.com/od/generaltechniques/a/sexandstress.htm>).

This issue of lack of bravery is further symbolized by the description of a scene involving a bird and a cat. The morning after the sex affair of the couples, Amsale ridicules Gulilat for not responding properly to her greeting; he is rather totally attracted by a scene of a cat hunting a bird (1980: 109). In the scene, the cat moves carefully on its chest on the ground, ready to hunt the bird. It catches the bird with great skill such that the scene commands the emotion of Gulilat who expresses shout of cheer. Amsale uses this opportunity to ridicule him saying he (and the other aristocrats and feudal lords) does not have the courage to hunt his enemy (1980: 109).

There are symbolic representations in the novel. Deribe, the former servant of the landlady, and who has currently become chairman of the revolution guard uses the phrase “ነገሩ ሌላ ቀን ነው” (“nägām lela qän näw”) [“tomorrow is another day”] while he was carrying Hirut (with whom he was crazy in love) who was shot by a bullet, to her residence and recalls the guns that have been buried underground by his landlady, instead of being handed over to the kebele. The expression that he uses in this situation is an example of the character's dedication to the revolution.

Similarly, the description of the scene in which the moon is hidden in heavy clouds, while Deribe was carrying Hirut after she was shot also symbolizes that she was going to die. It is at this moment that he also recalls the words of Nikoli Astroviski that he received from Emaelaf:

Man's dearest possession is life. It is given to him but once, and he must live it so as to feel no torturing regrets for wasted years, never know the burning shame of a mean and petty past; so live that, dying, he might say: all my life all my strength were given to the finest cause in all the world, the fight for the liberation of mankind...

The words are a reminder to Deribe that he is going to serve the revolution with full-heart, as Hirut, his love, is dying.

The wedding song over heard from the nearby village while Deribe was carrying Hirut home (1980: 252) symbolizes his engagement to the revolution rather than to Hirut, because Deribe has already realized that Hirut has passed away as revealed symbolically through the description of the moon covered by the heavy cloud. Deribe had also listened to her heart beat at the spot. Following this scene, Deribe questions "where does the road lead?" (1980: 252). He states that he has been suffering from two loves (1980: 149):

ለአስዋ ያለኝ ፍቅርና ለቀይ ኮከብ ያለኝ ፍቅር እየተወሳሰቡኝ ሄዷል

[My love to her (Hirut) and the love that I have to the Red Star is getting complicated.]

One of Deribe's loves, Hirut, passed away. The other love he is left with is the red star, meaning, the revolution. Therefore, he can serve this revolution with full commitment.

The wedding song might be further interpreted as sarcastic comments on Amsale and Gulilat. The song is heard repeatedly (1980: 209, 210, 252) to the ears of Amsale and the family members who were worried about the disappearance of Hirut for a whole day and night. The song at this particular period of sadness of the family seems to be a sarcastic presentation of the feudal society, and the hopelessness of the ruling class and the aristocrats and on the other hand the pleasure and freedom of the masses.

This same politics of competition for power is also represented in almost all of the second half of the second novel, *Maibäl Yabiyot Mäbača*, and in all the chapters of the third novel *Maibäl Yabiyot Magüst*. Since one of the main concerns of these two novels is revealing the competition for power, the characters in the novels are, in one way or another, attached to political groups. The feudal characters, Zurfeshiwal, Shewaye, Manaye, and Gebeyehu serve the EDU, in recruiting rebels and fighting at

different war fronts. Manaye, who has been recruited by Shewaye and Zerfeshiwal is killed while fighting against the government forces in Wollo province. Masresha, Demere, Tafesu and Zeleqa's new lover belong to the EPRP. Similarly, among the peasantry, Kassahun is a supporter of the Darg, while Gobeze is against it. Among the students, Tareqegne is presented as a supporter of the government, while Gebeyehu and Marqos are shown as either members or sympathizers of the opposition parties. Zeleqa is shot dead by EPRP. Some Darg officials are executed by Mengestu since they are suspected of supporting the opponent parties (1983: 222).

The novels generally characterize members of the EPRP as undemocratic, anti-revolutionary and undisciplined. As mentioned in the previous paragraph, Masresha is made to join the party cell and trained as a squad, without his will. Demere is portrayed as an undisciplined person who avenges people using the position he has in the party. EDU is totally categorized as a reactionary force that struggles to reinstitute the old political system. The novels' support is revealed using different methods like characterization and story development. The Darg is portrayed as a successful progressive force that got victory over its rivals. Its policies and programs are also considered as progressive and productive.

The novels, beyond having a historical and historical orientation that refer to real historical and political events and figures (like the Red and White Terrors) are also apologist, because they explicitly favour the Darg. Some of the descriptions of the political events represented in the novels match real historical and political descriptions of events written in historical and political documents, like in Bahru (2002). For instance, the aforementioned murder case of Dr. Fiqre Merid and the broadcast of the news to the people of Ethiopia, and the measure taken in response to the murder are stated in the novel, *Maibäl Yabiyot Magist* (1983: 49) and the historical book (Bahru, 2002a: 247) respectively, in the following ways:

አንድ የህዝብ ድርጅት ጉዳይ ጊዜያዊ ጽህፈት ቤት የክፍል ኃላፊ ከአውቶሞቢሉ ውስጥ እንዳለ በሽጉጥ ተገደለ። ወሬው በዜና ማሰራጫዎች ተነገረ። . . . ግድያውን በማስመልከት ከጊዜያዊ ወታደራዊ አስተዳደር ደርግ 'የአንድ ቆራጥ ታጋይ የደም ጠብታ በሺህ ጸረ-ህዝብ ሕይወት ትመካከራለች' የሚል ከባድ መገልጫ ወጣ።

[An official of the Provisional Office for Mass Organization Affairs has been shot dead in his car... The news was announced through the mass media. The

Darg vowed that the life of a revolutionary would be avenged by the lives of a thousand anarchists (1983: 49).]

The description given in the historical - political novel about the death of this official is similar to that described by the historical text:

The first major victim of the EPRP offensive was Dr Feqre Mar'ed, a Ma'ison member of the POMOA, who was assassinated later in the month. Vowing to avenge the life of one revolutionary with the lives of a thousand anarchists ... (2002a: 247).

Moreover, the descriptions given in Bahru (2002a: 258) and *Maibäl Yabiyot Magist* (1983: 47 - 48, 60) with regard to the assassination attempt on Mengestu, and the revenge that Mengestu took on suspected Darg members who secretly worked for EPRP match to a great extent. What is different in this regard is that the description in the novel is more detailed than what is found in Bahru's.

The former ministers (see 4.2.3.2.5), the chairman of the Darg and other higher officials are assigned fictional names, or are described through their status, without mentioning their real names. For instance, Mengestu is referred through his position, “ተቀዳሚው ምክትል ሊቀመንበር” (“täqädamiw mikitil liqä mänbär”) [the first vice chairman of the Darg] (1983, p. 45)”, while Dr. Fiqre Merid is named as “አንድ የህዝብ ደርጅት ጉዳይ ጊዜያዊ ጽህፈት ቤት የክፍል ሃላፊ” (“anid yähizib diriḳit guday gizeyawi s’ihfät bet yäkifil halafi”) [“an official of the Provisional Office for Mass Organization”] (1983: 49). Although the names of some real life characters are made fictional, some proclamations and policies are realistically represented, as in the original.

Like *Yäqäy Kokob T’irri*, there are symbolic representations of political events in connection with the major characters, Kassahun and Zerfeshiwal, in Berhanu’s trilogy. Kassahun couldn’t make sex with his wife, Zeinu, during their reunion in Addis Ababa, after they have been separated due to the famine. He thinks that the torture made him impotent. Here after Kassahun does not try to make love to Zeinu, believing that he was impotent for ever. He often wanted to divorce Zeinu thinking that he could not be her husband then after. Towards the end of the novel, when he was hospitalized for rabies, he consulted the doctor and learned that he was only suffering from psychological problem. With this, the late Muhe’s (the father of Zeinu who strongly support the revolution) ambition to see a grandchild seems to become

true through his daughter Zeinu and her husband, Kassahun. This could be a symbolic indication that success in the revolution was achieved through the struggle of the oppressed masses and the Darg. And Kassahun as a representative revolutionary young peasant can lead the revolution forward. The death of the opponent, Gobeze, suffering from rabies, could show the end of the reactionary forces like EDU and EPRP and their fellow sympathizers. The death of Masresha, Zeleka, Demeleash, and Demere, all members and sympathizers of EPRP and EDU symbolically show the final fate of the 'reactionaries'. Zerfeshiwal and Shewaye, the two landladies, disappear in the desert while trying to leave the country crossing the Ethio - Djibouti border. Their guide run away the moment he heard gun shots, leaving them alone in the bare desert. The two landladies are unlikely to save their lives as they are too old and very delicate to cross the desert and reach Djibouti, thus showing the final doom of the aristocracy.

Anguz (1982) is a vendetta novel which reflects Red Terror; however, the vendetta comes out of personal interest. Kebede, who is a chairman of the revolutionary guard and a former cart driver abusing his responsibility, avenges Senait by killing her two brothers and her father in the name of Red Terror, since her brothers and childhood friends mocked at him when he asked her for marriage. Kebede, being a revolutionary guard, accuses her brothers as if they were members of anti revolutionary party, exhibits false evidence to his fellow revolutionary guards, and murders them in the name of the Red Terror, without taking the case to court or other legal units. The revolutionary guards are given the right to take measures on those whom they suspect to be members of EPRP. Kebede uses this opportunity in avenging himself by killing Senait's family members.

Anguz reflects that in the Red Terror, people are not allowed to mourn or bury their dead relatives. In fact, they are even asked to pay for the bullets with which the victims are shot at (1992: 75). Senait's brothers did not belong to any political party; however, they became victims of the revolutionary guard. Many have been victimized because of such evil acts of some revolutionary guards. As a whole, the Kebele institutions, revolutionary guards, red and white terrors and the victimization of people because of vendettas and animosity are realistically represented in the novel.

In addition to the previous cases, victims of Red Terror are represented by EPRP youth members, such as Menen and Worku in the novel who lose their body parts due to the torture and gunshots. Menen is raped and her finger nails are pulled out. Fortunately, both Menen and Worku were able to save themselves from being killed in the dark along a crowd of prisoners; yet, Menen was shot on her leg, and Worku on one of his hands, during their escape.

The Red Terror and the competition for power between EPRP and the Darg are further reflected in the dialogues between Aregash and her childhood friend, Kidist, who is ignorant about the political situation of the country as she was abroad for a long time. The following extract is from the dialogue between Aregash and Kidist (1992: 73):

መንግስት ተገልብጦ . . . የነበረው ሁሉ ተወግዞ . . . አዲስ ፈሊጥ አዲስ ተስፋ አዲስ ህልም በተፈጠረበት ዘመን አመራር ለመጨበጥ በሥልጣን ኮርቻ ላይ አስቀድሞ ለመፈናጠጥ ግልቢያ በሆነበት ጊዜ በጅምላ ጨፈለቋቸው፤ በእነሱ እና እነሱን በመሰሉ ዜጎች ሬሳ ላይ ተረማምደው በደማቸው ተለቃልቀው ከስልጣን ወንበር ደምቀው ብቅ አሉ። ይህ ውልሽ ሥልጣን ሲያነፈንፉ የነበሩ ናቸው የቀሰፏቸው . . . የበሏቸው . . .

“እነማን ነበሩ የሚሻሙት?” ቅድስት ልብ ብላ አረጋሽኝ አስተዋለቻት።

“ብዙዎች ነበሩ ብዙ ስም ነበራቸው። መኢሶን፣ ኢጭአት፣ ማሌሪድ፣ ኢህአፓ፣ ሰደድ ብቻ ሌሎችም ስማቸው ጠፋኝ እንጂ እነዚህ ሁሉ ተነስተው ነበር። . . . በመካከላቸው ቅራኔ ይፈጠርና እነዚያ የጠራሁልሽ እነ ሰደድ እነ መኢሶን መጀመሪያ እርስ በእርሳቸው ነው አሉ። እንደገናም ከወታደሩ መንግስት ጋር ተብላሉ፤ ውይ ያንን ዘመን አይመልሰው አናርኪስት የሚሏቸው በቀኑ በጠራራው ጸሀይ ሰው በሚተራመስበት ቦታ የሚያጠፉትን ነጥለው ዘርረውት ይሄዳሉ። ሌላው ጎን ደግሞ ሌሊቱን ሲጨፈጭፉ ያድሩና ሲነጋ የሰው ሬሳ በየደጃፉ በየመንገዱ ይጣላል። ምናለፋሽ ደም እንደጎርፍ ወረደ። . . .

[The old government was overthrown... all that happened in the past was condemn ... at such a time when new hopes, prospects and dreams were made, power competitions became common... they crushed people in masses blindly; and then by bathing in their blood, and stepping over their corpses, they took power. You see, it was those power seekers that massacred the children.

“Who were those competing for power?” asked Kidist, staring at Aregash.

“They were many; they had different names; Maison, Iç’iat, Malerid, Ihapa, Sädäd and others whose names I have forgotten were all involved...Then

contradiction was created first among sädäd and Mäison. Then they quarrelled with the Darg government. They killed those whom they called anarchists in broad day light. In other instances they killed the anarchists during the night and threw their bodies on door-steps and road-sides at down. You see, it was in this way that there was a blood bath.]

The blood bath into which the country was immersed is described in such a way by one of the characters in the novel.

Most of the political events in the novel, *Anguz*, are reflected overtly using dialogue, characterization, and story development. The Darg and its opponent parties, the power competition among different organizations, and the Red Terror are reflected at micro level like the representation in *Yäqäy Kokob T'irri* (see the analysis made in the preceding paragraphs, under same section 5.2.2.), and *Anguz*, through the Kebele leaders, Kebede and Belachew, and the Red Terror victims such as Menen, Worku, Senait's brothers and father. The novel was written in the post contemporary period of the events, after the fall of the Darg government.

In *Anguz*, all the three female characters, Aregash, Kidist and Senait get married to soldiers. Aregash marries her abductor soldier who died from an accidental explosion of gun. Kidist has a child from her lover, Colonel Jigsa, an army officer in one of the northern war fronts. She loved the colonel, attracted by his heroic deeds and his good conduct. Senait marries major Abera, who was her childhood friend and her rescuer, when she was seriously sick because of the suicide attempt that she committed after revenging Kebede, who was the chairman of the kebele revolutionary guard that killed her family members. Why do all the three girls get engaged to soldiers? Does it have any connection to the authoress's dedication of the novel to General Tariku and other army officers who were victims of Mengestu and the Red Terror? Some of the male and female characters could represent something implicitly. Perhaps, Kebede could represent the incumbent Darg rulers for he is their agent who performs the different tasks of the revolution. The death of Kebede can be considered as a relief for the victims in particular and the whole country in general, because he killed many innocent people, and has been one of the very corrupted administrators of the Darg. Senait could be considered as a representative of the mothers who sacrificed themselves for the wellbeing of their children at that time. The embryo that Senait conceives could represent Kebede's seeds of evil. Her miscarriage of the embryo

shows the destruction of evil and represents the freedom of the country. The sufferance and pain that Senait received and her commitment to eliminate Kebede and his collaborator, Belachew, could represent the dedication paid for the freedom of the country and the people from the savage rule. Senait's marriage to Major Abera, who was her childhood friend and rescuer, arguably represents the exhaustion of many people with the military junta, and their need for some kind of shelter that can protect them from danger. An alternative shelter might be to return to the old system. That may be the reason why Senait wanted the protection of her childhood friend who has always been in her heart. Kidist's lover, Colonel Jigsa, might represent the true hero of Ethiopia. He is executed for the simple reason that he forwards the questions of his army to higher military officials. Her having a child from the hero might further represent hope that might come in the future.

5.2.3. The Ethio-Somali War

In 1977, Somalia invaded Ethiopia (refer to the context of the study, section 2.3.2.2.2.). The invasion did not begin as a full scale war; it was a guerrilla war conducted in the name of ethnic parties and fronts like the Western Somalia Liberation Front (Marcus, 1994: 197). EPRP, OLF and EOPRS also supported the ethnic movement of Western Somalia Liberation Front. OLF and EOPRS themselves participated in the guerrilla war (Bahru, 2002a: 254). Following this, Somalia declared a full scale war and crossed the Ethiopian borders and captured some cities like Jijiga (now Jigjiga), Degahabur and Kebridahar, and even marched deep into the former Harrarge province. The Darg made a call to the people of Ethiopia, trained around three hundred thousand militias and repulsed the enemy within a short period of time. The victory of the Ethiopian Army over the Somali Army and the ethnic guerrilla fighters gave the Darg a propaganda advantage over EPRP and the other ethnic parties and turned its face to the northern Ethiopian fronts to eliminate once and for all the EPRP, EDU, TPLF and ELF armies in Gondar, Tigray, and Eritrea provinces (Marcus, 1994: 200; Bahru, 2002a, 254 - 255).

The Somali invasion of Ethiopia occupies little space in many of the novels. However it is touched in some of the novels for different purposes. For instance, in *Yäqäy Kokob T'irri* (1980: 113), the invasion and the call made by the Darg to the people, called "Enat Hagär T'irri" (call of the mother land) and the stand of EPRP regarding

the invasion are briefly touched. *Maibäl Yabiyot Magist* also makes a little reference to the subject (1983: 296 -297).

Unlike the other novels, the novel, *T'amra T'or* (1983), by Gebeyehu Ayele, is fully devoted to the invasion and the defence that the Ethiopian Somali people and the army made. Historically, the Somali war took place in 1977 and 1978 in the eastern part of the country (Marcus, 1994: 197; Bahru, 2002a: 254). It is described in the preface of the novel that the story is based on two real life police squad members who were by chance saved when the Somali invaders attacked the Sheqo district police. The two police squad characters could not meet their brigade or any section of the Ethiopian army or their families who live at Kebridahar, because they are cut from their groups. They starved in the desert where there is no one to care for them. The two soldiers then go to the nearby city, Degehabur, where they meet local Ethiopian Somalis who are striving to organize secret patriots group to defend their territory. Once the group is organized, the police characters are given tasks by the secret organization and begin to fight the Somali invaders at Degehabur, using city and urban guerrilla warfare tactics. The secret group recruits many members who play different roles, in spying and fighting the invaders. The two police squad members, Berihun and Asegid, play a vital role in the organization as city guerrilla fighters. They execute several key war officers of the Somali army and other people who are potential treats to the secret organization. Therefore, the secret groups whom the invaders call 'tamira- t'or' (which literally means 'a spear with two sharp ends') fight courageously the Somali soldiers until the Ethiopian army frees the area and chases them from the Ethiopian border. Even though they lost many of their friends in the war, the secret group managed to dismiss and chase the Somali army and contribute to the liberation of the province.

The novel is limited in its coverage in that it does not deal with what happened in the whole Harerge region. It does not deal with the preparation of the two countries for the war; it does not either inform the objective of the Somali invaders, except that it is explained as expansion of the Somali government. The responses of the Ethiopian political parties like EPRP, OLF, İch'iat to the invasion are not touched. The power struggle in the capital and some other major cities in the country, the problems that

existed in different border areas of the country, and the militia who played vital role in freeing the country from the Somali invaders are not presented in detail.

The novel represents the event at micro level based on the experience of the two real life characters. The narrator tells the story following the footsteps of the two characters, Berihun and Asegid. The fighting that took place at Shego and Degahabur is narrated. The focus is on the sacrifice that the two squad members and the local people make in dismantling the enemy in guerrilla war fighting. The reason for this is that the story is narrated from the angle of the two police squad members who are already detached from their military group and brigade. They were able to join the local people by accident. Therefore, the novel is the story of the two soldiers and the local Ethiopian-Somali patriots, rather than the full scale war of Ethiopia against Somalia.

The novel was published five years after the war. It was based on a fresh memory of the war on the part of the writer and of the readers at the time. In other words, the novel represents the war to contemporary readers of the period, within the regime. It positively represented the actions of the Darg government and the army for the obvious reason that the war was a military aggression against Ethiopians, and that it was a defence of national sovereignty on the part of the Ethiopians. No symbolic or implicit representation that has contribution either to the beauty or thematic significance of the political events related to the war seems to exist in the novel. All the representation is overt as the novel is not a critique of the Darg or the Ethiopian army and the people.

One of the significant purposes of the novel seems to be showing the love of the Ethiopian Somalis to their country, Ethiopia, and the patriotism they showed in defending their region and their country from the Somali invaders, despite the fact that the invaders and Ethiopin-Somalis belonged to the same race, spoke one language, had the same religion (Islam). In the novel, even though, there are some Somalis that support the Somali invaders, it is observed that most of the Ethiopian Somalis fight the invaders. Ismail, Halima and her husband and others are seen resisting the invaders; some of them even died for their country, Ethiopia.

In the novel, the Ethiopian Somali people are shown living peacefully together with other ethnic groups. The two non-Somali police squads, Berihun and Asegid, are able to survive only because they get the love and assistance of the local Ethiopian Somali people; it is the local Ethiopian Somali woman who gives them water and food when they were starved to death (1984: 41). We also see that it is Ismail who helps Berihun and Asegid at Degehabur to join the secret patriots group (1984: 86 - 115). Anebo, a militia member from Kefa Keficho, is also freed from prison with the help of the secret guerrilla fighters most of whose members are Ethiopian - Somalis (1984: 221 - 225). The story reflects the love and respect of the local people (Ethiopian Somali) to the other ethnic groups in Ethiopia - a theme reflected by means of story development and characterization.

5.2.4. The Red Star Multifaceted Revolutionary Campaign

The Darg, encouraged by the victory of the Ethiopian army over Somalia launched the Red Star Multifaceted Revolutionary Campaign (Marcus, 1994: 202; Bahru, 2002a: 255; Gebru, 2002: 465 - 466). This campaign was designed to destroy the secessionists of Eritrea, EPLF and ELF, and other opposition groups (TPLF, EDU and EPRP who were conducting guerrilla war in Eritrea, Tigre, and Gondar provinces). The government also wanted to reconstruct infrastructure and develop the economy, the reasons for calling the campaign multifaceted. Although the program claimed to deal with the aforementioned issues in the Northern provinces, the main target was to destroy the secessionist group EPLF militarily and the centre of the program was Asmara, Eritrea.

This politics is represented exhaustively and contemporaneously in *Oromay*. The author, Bealu, wrote the novel after his personal experience in participating in the event in 1983. He was assigned in Asmara as chief of the propaganda section for the campaign. The novel was on market only before it was banned after 500 copies were sold in 24 hours. It was banned since it was a critique of the different experiences of the campaign explicitly, and portrayed the real Darg officials under the guise of fictional names. The novel was first published after getting an approval of the two highest officials of the Darg, Mengestu and Fiqreselassie (Dawit, 1989). However, the two persons changed their minds, ordered the collection of the book from the market and dismissed the author from his job, whose where-about was finally unknown.

Hollander (1976: 217) in connection with such kinds of experiences believes that, art can be and has been subordinated to politics in various ways. At the minimum, the rulers can simply proscribe the intrusion of ideas they consider undesirable and can prevent the writers' political ideas from gaining literary expression. Accordingly, this was the fate of Bealu and his novel, *Oromay*. The novel was published for the second time after the EPRDF came to power.

The representation of the politics of the campaign in *Oromay* is overt and realistic. It also matches to facts recorded in historical and political documents like in Gebru (2002), Bahru (2002a) and Dawit (1989). As to Gebru (2002: 472), the campaign had a dual purpose - to end the insurgency in Eritrea militarily, and to rehabilitate the provincial society economically, politically and culturally. It was an all-front assault on the Eritrean nationalist movement, even though the military aspect gained primacy eventually. The motto was military victory first, and then civic action.

The main secessionist party, EPLF, is not passive to the campaign in the novel. Rather, it launches a counter program called, *Oromay*, which name the novel takes. According to *Oromay* (1983: 344), the main objective of the counter program is to stop the Red Star Multifaceted Revolutionary Campaign through making sudden attacks and bewildering the Ethiopian Army: blocking roads, cutting communication lines, spreading propaganda and making suicide attacks. Likewise, it was inevitable for EPLF and TPLF to design defence mechanisms or counter attacks against the Red Star Multifaceted Revolutionary Campaign in reality. That was why the campaign was not successful both militarily and politically. The EPLF and TPLF designed counter mechanisms, probably after getting the secrets of the detailed plan of the campaign beforehand. Nonetheless, the preparation of the Darg was so huge in terms of man power, logistics and psychology. The Ethiopian army also had the military support of the Soviets (Gebru, 2002; Dawit, 1989).

The Operation of the Red Star Multifaceted Revolutionary Campaign was announced on 25 January 1981 (Gebru, 2002:472). The office of the Ethiopian government was transferred temporarily to Asmara for this purpose; and most of the ministers and security and military officials were engaged in the campaign. Some of the activities of the campaign included the preparation of a festival in Massawa, organization of a national workshop, and setting plans to organize peasants and urban dwellers in

peasant and urban dwellers (Kebele) associations. All these situations are realistically and overtly represented almost in all the five chapters of the novel.

Among the components of the program, major focus was given to the military aspect. Five different Army commanders were organized for the military campaign; the “Wuqaw” command of Algena; “Nadäw” command at the Naqfa front, “Mäbräq” command in Karkabat, and “Mäkit” and “Central zone” commands around Asmara, and in Tigray, Gondar and south Eritrea respectively. These commands had different divisions and brigades (Gebru, 2002: 479; Ministry of National Defense (MOND) File No. 4635: 15).

Among these commands, the first three that were situated in Algena, Naqfa and Karkabat fronts are realistically and adequately represented in the novel (1983: 289 - 291). The army-rebel ratio is shown to be more than 3:1 in the novel (1983: 290 - 291) while it is 4:1 in Gebru’s (2002: 478) historical study. The different brigades and divisions, and the fronts in which they fought, the strategic hills like 1725, 1755, 1702, 2059 (1983: 190) and the others are realistically reflected in the novel and match with historical and political documents (Gebru, 2002: 465 - 498). The fightings that took place in these strategic hills and places are reflected in some details, focussing especially on the strategic hill 1702 (1983: 301 - 334), that has been drawn on the front cover design of *Oromay*. The fighting in the strategic hill 1702 is given focus because the story is narrated by the protagonist who accompanies the Red Tulip Army to the hill. The fighting conducted in hill 1702 has been recorded in different documents of the Ministry of National Defence (MOND) (Zemecha - 044: Feb. 17 - 18/1982; Feb. 23 - 24/1982). The dates on which the Red Star Multifaceted Revolutionary Campaign began, and on which the military operations were conducted are also exact representations of the real time, generally from 25 December, 1981 to June, 1982. Furthermore, political events related to the festival organized in Massawa (1983: 185 - 210), the jamming of the broadcast of radio Shabia, the use of the Asmara radio station for the exclusive coverage of the campaign (1983: 40 - 48), and the conference held in Asmara (1983: 238 - 241) are all represented in *Oromay* realistically and overtly.

The authorial narrator believes that the Red Star Multifaceted Revolutionary Campaign was not successful. It represented failure in all aspects: militarily,

politically, and economically. The reasons for its failure included the difficult topography of Eritrea, lack of coordination of the different army groups, and the act of saboteurs and defectors.

Even though it is a literary work, *Oromay* is a true witness and record of the real experience of the Red Star Multifaceted Revolutionary Campaign. It could be considered as a historical document of the event. Researchers like Gebru (2002) have used the novel as a resource and referred to it in their research reports. Regarding this, Gebru notes (2002: 496: “Though fictional, the events and characters in the drama closely correspond to those of the real campaign in that the author (deputy minister of information) was chief of propaganda”.

According to Dawit (1989), who was one of the organizers of the Campaign, the novel is a realistic representation of the real life experience of the Red Star Campaign. The dates and historical places in which the campaign took place, the plan and its implementation, key persons of the program are correct representations. Even most of the characters are real life persons presented disguisedly using fictional names. For instance, the chairman of the Darg, Mengestu, is named mostly as “säwiyäw” (the man) and sometimes by his real name. The main character, Tsegaye, represents the author himself, Bealu. He was the deputy minister of information and chief of the propaganda wing for the Red Star Multifaceted Revolutionary Campaign in reality. The coordinator, Solomon Betre, represents Colonel Dawit Woldegiorgis, who was successively deputy foreign minister, governor of Eritrea, and finally chief of Relief and Rehabilitation Commission. The security man, Colonel Betre, seems to represent Colonel Tesfaye Woldeselassie, the then security minister of the Darg government (Dawit, 1989: 110 - 111).

According to Lowe (2003), *Oromay* represents some political events of the campaign through symbolism. For him, the female protagonists, Roman and Fiameta, represent Ethiopia and Eritrea/peace in Eritrea/ respectively. Roman represents Ethiopia because she is from the centre of the country, Addis Ababa. She looks like most of the Amharas and Shawas. She likes coffee ceremony that Ethiopia is identified with. Fiameta represents Asmara and peace because she is repeatedly described connotatively as ‘Asmara’, ‘palm’, and ‘dove’.

Tsegaye, the narrator, himself states (1983: 285 - 286), “አስመራና ፊያሜታን ለይቼ አላያቸውም” (“asmāranina fīyametan läyiche alayačāwim”) [Asmara and Fiyameta are one and the same to me]. Moreover, Fiameta’s words about her love to Tsegaye, a person who came from the centre, further strengthen the idea that she is a representative of Asmara: “ሲፈለግህት የኖሩትን ሰው አግኝቶ ማጣት ነው” (“sifāligut yānorutīn säw agiñto mat’at näw”) [It is just like losing a person that is met after a long time]. Fiameta further compares herself to Roman, Tsegaye’s fiancé saying (1983: 351):

እስቲ ባባትህ ንገረኝ፤ እንደ እኔ ትሆንልሃለች? እንደኔ ትወድሃለች? ከኔ የበለጠ አንተ ላይ ምን መብት አላት? የተለዋወጣችሁት ቀለበት ነው ቁም ነገሩ? ባታውቀው ነው እንጂ እኔ ህይወቴን ልለውጥልህ ነው

[Tell me please in the name of your father; does she act to you like I do? Does she love you like I do love you? What special right does she have on you than me? Is it the ring that you exchanged which is important? Though you are not aware of it, I am going to give my life for you.]

Fiameta who is the new lover of Tsegaye compares herself to Tsegaye’s fiancé, Roman who is in Addis Ababa, the centre. Her question, “What special right does she have on you than mine?” could show the representation that she is from Asmara, and Asmara as part of Ethiopia had the right to be seen as an equal. Unlike most Asmara women, Fiameta is shown to be disinterested in living in exile (in Arab countries); the implication of this could be that Asmara and its people are part of Ethiopia, and not Arabs, as some Eritreans think.

Tsegaye is represented symbolically as a true son of Ethiopia. At the end of the novel, Fiameta is shot dead because she does not want to expose Tsegaye to the EPLF killer squads. Roman, his fiancé who came from Addis Ababa to Asmara, is angry with him so that she throws her ring and says goodbye to him for good after she attends the burial ceremony of Fiameta. Thus, Tsegaye loses both Ethiopia and Asmara because Fiameta is assassinated. Interpretation of Lowe with respect to the female characters is plausible, because the hope of dismissing the EPLF at that particular campaign fails as the Ethiopian army is not successful in the war.

Interpreting Roman as representing Ethiopia might not be as easily understood as that of Fiameta’s representation of Asmara, because it does not seem logical that Roman,

who represents Ethiopia, could envy Fiameta, who represents Asmara because of her love to Tsegaye who represents the true son of Ethiopia. Tsegaye, as a true son of Ethiopia, is trying to form unity between Ethiopia and Eritrea. But, politics is mixed with love in the story, and therefore it is inevitable that Roman must envy Fiameta for loving him so much. Conversely, in the novel, *Yäburqa Zimäta*, the Eritrean character, Roza in her talk with Anole argues that “**ፊያሜታ ኢትዮጵያዊት እንጂ ኤርትራዊት አይደለችም ማንም ይህንኑ ይነግርሃል**” [“Fiameta is an Ethiopian rather than Eritrean. Every Eritrean can tell you this”]. When Anoli asked Roza **ፊያሜታን ለምን እንዲህ አየሻት?** [“what makes you to say so?”], Roza’s response was, “**በበኩሌ ኤርትራዊት ወጣት እንደ ፊያሜታ ስታስብ ጨርሶ ሰምቼና አይቼ አላውቅም፤ ፊያሜታ ኢትዮጵያዊት ናት ብለን ልንቀበል ግን ይቻለናል**” [“as to me, I have never seen and heard any Eritrean young woman who thinks like Fiameta. However, we can believe that Fiameta has an Ethiopian nationality”].

The alienation of Tsegaye from the love of Roman or Ethiopia could be seen from a different angle. As Tsegaye is merely a representative of the author of the novel, he might feel that he is alienated from his colleagues and his family; displaced from his position, and his job; he might even suspect that his life is in danger as he knows, from experience, the evil nature of the Darg government. The author seemed to be aware of his death in his short story entitled “*yäfis’amew mäjämäriya*” (the beginning of the end) which was published some time before the publication of *Oromay*. Some officials of the Darg like Major Dawit also had given him strong signal that the novel should not be published as long as the regime is in power (Dawit, 1989: 110-111). Dawit in relation to this and the destiny of Bealu wrote:

Bealu Girma, the Deputy Minister of Information, was a knowledgeable man with a remarkable talent and a pleasant personality. The author of several books, Bealu was brought in by Mengistu to work under me during the Red Star Campaign as Chief of Propaganda. He was enthusiastic about the program initially and worked zealously on it. Then, as he saw the ideals of the program founder under the pressure of militaristic attitudes, he started writing a book on the campaign. When Red Star was abruptly suspended and Mengistu returned to Addis, Bealu stayed behind and completed his book, called *Oromai*. I read a chapter and outline. He wrote it as a novel, changing all the names, but it was obvious who was who. I was a central character known as Solomon. I knew the book would never make it through the COPWE censors; what worried me was that even the attempt to publish a cynical novel that mocked the entire exercise could get him in trouble.

The novel portrays some of the characters, like Mengestu, Colonel Betru who represents Colonel Tesfaye Woldeselassie, and Solomon Betre who represents Colonel Dawit Woldegiorgis positively, perhaps for tactical reasons. It could be for this reason that Mengestu gave the permission for the publication of the book. Unfortunately, he later changed his idea and dismissed the author from his job and refused to allow his employment anywhere else. Two months later, Bealu disappeared (Dawit, 1989: 110-111).

Contrary to the positive representation of Mengestu, Betru and Solomon, the novel mocked the ideologist Yeshitila Masresha and the economist, Meshafe Daniel, who represented real life officials of Mengestu, though the mocks do not seem to be serious enough to ignite anger to avenge the author. If there is any anger that comes out of serious criticism, it should come from major Tadesse Qoricho and another character known by the code name “Beaurocracy” who is represented as the key Shabiya man working in the Darg.

The Darg arguably is responsible for the disappearance of Bealu, perhaps because the novel criticizes the entire exercise of the Red Star Campaign program and some operations of the Darg in Asmara by the Special Forces of the Ethiopian Army at the end of the 1970s and the beginning of the 1980s (1983: 118-121; 1989: 92, 93-101). The novel might further have exposed some authorities serving in Asmara as corruptors, womanizers and power mongers. The following incident which is narrated in the novel (1983: 100) and the real event presented by Dawit (1989: 92) witness the rampant corruption that took place at the time. The extract below is taken from the novel (1983: 100):

አንድ ባልና ሚስት ነበሩ። እዚሁ ከተማ። ሰውየው ሀብታም ነጋዴ ነበር። ሴትዬዋ በጣም ቆንጆ ነበረች። ታዲያ አሁን ስሙን ለመጥራት የማልፈልገው አንድ ባለስልጣን ሴትዬዋን ይፈልጋታል። እምቢ ትለዋለች። በሥልጣኑ ተጠቅሞ ሰውየውን በወንጀል ወስዶ ያሳስረዋል። ከዚያም በኋላ ሴቲቱን ማስቸገር ይጀምራል። አሁንም እምቢ ትለዋለች። እንደማይሆንለት ሲያውቅ 50 ሺ ብር ከሰውየው ጉቦ ተቀብሎ ይለቀዋል። ይቆይና ነጋዴው ድንገት ያጋልጠኝ ይሆናል በማለት እንደገና ወስዶ ያሳስረዋል። ከጥቂት ቀን በኋላ ነጋዴው የደረሰበት ይጠፋል። ሴቲቱ ባሏን በመፈለግ ያልደረሰችበት ወህኒ ቤት የለም። ገንዘብ ስጭንና ባልሽ የት እንዳለ እናሳይሽ በማለት የሚያታልሏት ነበሩ። ለዚህም ገንዘብ ለዚያም ገንዘብ ስትል ገንዘቧን ጨረሰች። ከሰውነትም ወጣች። አንዴ ኦጋዴን ግንባር ተልኳል ይሏታል።

ሌላ ጊዜ ደግሞ ሽፍቱ በረሀ ገብቷል ይሏታል። አዲስ አበባ አለም በቃኝ ነው ይሏታል። ሁሉም ቦታ ሄዳለች። ባሏ ግን የትም አልነበረም። በመጨረሻ እኔ ጋ ደረሰች። ነገሩን አጣራሁና ባልሽ ሙቷል አዝናለሁ አልኳት። የሚገርማችሁ እልል ብላ ጮኮች። የደስታ አልነበረም እልል ያለችው። እውነቷን በማወቁ ነው። ልቅሶ ሃዘን መቀመጥ እችላለሁ? አለችኝ። የፈለግኸውን ማድረግ ትችያለሽ አልኳት።

[There were a couple, in this city. The man was rich. A government official whom I don't want to call his name now showed his interest in the wife. The women said 'no'. The official falsely accused the husband and jailed him. He troubled the woman now and then; but she resisted. When he realized that he couldn't win her, he released the man after he receiving a bribe of birr 50,000. But, the official jailed the man for the second time for he was afraid that the man might expose him. After some time, the man disappeared from the prison camp. The woman wanted her husband in every prison camp but she couldn't find him. Some people asked her to give them money so that they could tell her his whereabouts. She lost all her money giving it to such persons. She suffered both mentally and physically. Some of them told her that he went to Ogaden. Others informed her that he had joined the rebels. Some others told her that he was in "Alām Bāqa★" prison, Addis Ababa. She checked every place they told her. But he was nowhere. Lastly, she appealed her case to me. I investigated her case and told her that her husband was dead. Surprisingly, the woman ululated the moment she heard the truth. She ululated not because she was pleased but for she knew the truth. She asked me, "Can I arrange mourning?" I said to her, yes, you can make whatever you like.]

A similar case is told from the real life experience of Dawit (1989: 92) when he was an administrator of Eritrea:

One case I remember very well. A man who had been running a popular bar vanished one day. His young wife set out to find him. She was told by someone that he was at Expo 67, and that he had disappeared from there. She paid a \$700 bribe to get into Expo prison and ask those who had known him what had happened. She heard he was taken out one evening and never heard from again. Someone else told her that he and other young men had been sent to the Ogden to serve as soldiers, and when the Somalia invaded they were captured and repatriated to the EPLF-ELF. Grasping this hope, she travelled to the rebel-held lowlands by camel and by foot; in two months she went from Keren to Agordat then Tessenei, asking the guerrillas if they knew of the husband. She came back with no answer. She checked all the major prisons in the other parts of Ethiopia. She bribed people who told her they had information. Such could never stop searching, even when she knew inside that he was dead it was able to accept it; only then could she put on her black dress and start to mourn.

The Darg could also have eliminated Bealu, because the novel exposes and arguably declares the failure of the campaign. The novel, though with no deliberate intention, could have been considered as one revealing military and war secrets, especially in connection with the strategic places and hills, and the army

One of the reasons for the author, represented in the novel by the character, Tsegaye, for criticising the campaign is his realization that the war was between same people, as read below: (1983: 187):

አሸዋ ውስጥ ተቀብረው የቆዩ ሁለት የሰው ጭንቅላት አጥንቶች አግኝቼ እየተመለከትኩ ሳስብ ነበር የቆየሁት። በመጨረሻ ሁለቱን አጥንቶች አስተያየሁ። የትኛው ይሆን የቱ? አንዱን ከሌላው ለይቼ ለማወቅ አልቻልኩም። ሁለቱም አንድ አይነት ቅርጽ ያላቸው የኢትዮጵያውያን ጭንቅላት አጥንቶች ነበሩ። ሁለቱንም አጥንቶች ካገኘኳቸው ሥፍራ መልሼ በጥንቃቄ አሸዋ ካለበስኳቸው በኋላ እያዘነኩ ወደ መኪናዬ ስሄድ . . .

[I came late as I spent hours looking at two skulls that I got in the sand. I looked at the two skulls. I couldn't recognize which skull belonged to whom? Both were the skulls of two Ethiopians that have similar structures. I put the two skulls in the sand carefully and covered them with sand and with a deep sense of grief I went to my car.]

Like Tsegaye, the character, Colonel Wolday, who is the army chief of the strategic mountain 1702, is aware that the people who are engaged in the fighting are the people of one Ethiopia. The war is between the children of Ethiopia as read below (1983: 293):

ከነዚህ ሰዎች ጋር አንድ ላይ ብንቆም ይህን ገዢ መሬት ይዘን እሚበግረን የውጭ ጠላት ከቶ አይኖርም ነበር። ሁለታችንም ወኔ ለወኔ የምንተዋወቅ ያንዲት ኢትዮጵያ ልጆች ነበርን። ያለመታደል ነው። ለዚህም ነው ይህ ጦርነት እጅግ አሳዛኝ እጅግ መራራና አስቃቂ የሚሆነው።

[With such great landscape, no foreign enemy would win us if we stand together with these people. All of us are the children of Ethiopia who can understand each other's bravery. We are really unfortunate. That is the reason for the war is to be very tragic and bitter.]

Therefore, all such comments could have contributed to the dismissal of Bealu from his job and his disappearance.

5.2.5. Class Composition, Corruption, Democracy and Inequality in the Darg period

Class relationships are not the main concern of these post-revolution novels. Relationships between the aristocrats and the peasantry, the working class and the capitalists became less significant perhaps because the problems were alleviated due to the new land policy and the nationalization of private enterprises. The novelists represented various institutions as partisans to the workers and the mass of the people. Therefore, the main preoccupation of the novels is the relationship between different competitive parties. Of course there are few representations of class compositions in some of the novels that are used to provide background to the main events of the novels. For instance, though the main concern is power competition, and the main conflict is between political groups having different ideologies, *Yäqäy Kokob T'irri* represents the feudal class in connection with the background of characters and the revolution.

The organization, EPRP, is also described as a composition of the feudal class and its remnants. It is also considered as immoral as it encourages its female members to trap the enemies of the party for the benefit of the organization (1980:171-175). However, in reality, it was impossible to say that EPRP was composed of feudal class members and drug addicts. Therefore, we observe a deliberate miss-representation of the fact to show partiality to the Darg government. The character, Deribe, represents working class members who support the revolution. AESM is also represented by Wassihun and the unethical four journalists.

In the novel, *Anguz*, the main story is not based on relationships between the poor and the rich, landlords and peasantry, working class and factory owners. It neither deals with ideological conflict between different political groups. The story is rather a vendetta story that is related to the Red Terror. The vendetta comes out of personal interest.

In connection to democracy, *Maibäl Yabiyot Mäbača* and *Maibäl Yabiyot Magüst* portray the Darg as progressive. The novels are loyal to the military government; yet, one reads the undemocratic nature of the Darg government when they represent the execution of the Emperor and his 59 officials, and the other rival members within the Darg. The novels also reflect the killing of tens of thousands of people during the Red

Terror. As could be understood directly and indirectly from the novels, Mengestu does not show much effort to call opposition parties to work together with his party. In fact, he dismisses his former allied parties like ASLM, EOPRS, and Wäzlig, once his party, Abiyotawi Sädäd, was well organized. All of these reflected and witnessed the un-democratic nature of the Darg.

Lack of democracy is also represented in *Yäqäy Kokob Tirri*, through the interaction of characters and political groups. There is no dialogue or treaty among rival political parties. They rather try to destroy each other and fully control power. Each political party or group condemns the other as reactionary or anarchist. The EPRP kills Kebele officials, Darg members and the AESM people; and in turn the Darg and the AESM kill the EPRP members. Once it eliminated the EPRP, the Darg turned its face to AESM and other rival parties and detained or killed their members (*Yäqäy Kokob Tirri*, 1979; Bahru, 2002a: 247). This can be understood from the experience of Wassihun, one of the characters in *Yäqäy Kokob Tirri*, who is a member of AESM, a party allied to the Darg. He kills EPRP and EDU members and even other innocent people. But, once the Darg got victory over the EPRP, it turned its face to its former ally, AESM (*Yäqäy Kokob Tirri*, 1979; Marcus, 1994: 200; Bahru, 2002a: 247) and Wassihun is detained.

Oromay (1983) also reflects the undemocratic characteristic of the Darg and the different political organizations. For instance, the novel shows that the objectives of the Red Star Revolutionary Campaign were not discussed by the people using different mechanisms. The people of Ethiopia, especially the people of the province of Eritrea should have known about and discussed the campaign first. That is why in the novel, the people of Asmara are bewildered by the program, and worried. One observes shortage of items in the market; and people buy food items at inflated prices as they are not sure what is happening there.

From the very beginning, the Red Star Multifaceted Revolutionary Campaign was not democratic, because one of its major objectives was to eliminate opponent parties like EPLF, ELF, EDU and EPRP whose bases were in Eritrea, Tigrai and Gondar provinces respectively. There should have been different alternative peaceful solutions designed to solve the problem. The Darg proposed and initiated the program

pushed by the success it got over the Somalia invaders, and their ally fronts (Oromay, 1983; Gebru, 2002).

However, it is not only the Darg that is shown to be undemocratic; the EPLF is also undemocratic as could be understood from its practice reflected in the novel. For instance, the front does not either invite the military government for peace treaty. It rather launches a counter campaign called 'Oromay' killing innocent Eritrean people who are suspected of having connections with the Red Star Multifaceted Revolutionary Campaign. The front also violates human rights in that it uses handicapped individuals to hold forts using heavy machineguns believing that such people do not have the ability to retreat or run to save their lives (1983: 324). It is not also possible to say that all members of Shabia fight voluntarily; some are hijacked and forced to train in Guerrilla war techniques. They are forced to line up on the front and fight or otherwise could be shot by some loyal soldiers if they attempt to escape or retreat from the fight, as it could be read from the dialogues of characters (1983: 325 - 326).

Eventhough the Darg claimed that the revolution brought democracy, there were not real democratic situations in the country. The Darg was not itself democratic as it was run by the dictatorship of one man, Mengestu. In addition, Mengestu executed some of his fellow Darg members, Major Sisay Habte, Major Kiros, Captain Moges, General Teferi Benti, General Aman Andom, and Major At'nafu Abate whom he considered to be threats to his ultimate power; ultimately, it was declared that he was the president of the Federal Republic of Ethiopia. The Darg, Mengestu, ruled the country for 17 years using different names (Marcus, 1994; Bahru, 2002a). Thus, there was no democratic situation within the Darg itself let alone, the creation of a democratic relationship with different political groups. This reality is represented in *Anguz* (1992:73 - 75, 241- 243, 281-284) through the dialogues of characters and the development of the story.

The Darg did not want to share power with other parties; it rather regarded opposition parties as enemies. That was why it declared Red Terror in which tens of thousands were massacred with no legal grounds. The Kebeles killed the EPRP members and innocent Ethiopians and demanded that the families of the victims pay money as replacement costs of the bullets with which they shot the victims. Families were not allowed to mourn and bury their dead relatives. The dead were rather thrown away for

wild animals, or were buried in masses. The victims sometimes were made to dig their own graves. These appalling political situations are also represented in *Anguz* (1992: 74-75, 281-84).

Anguz reflects that people were not allowed to transport grains, clothes, and coffee from place to place for sale; let alone across borders, even a small amount of grain that can be used as consumption for a small family within the country. Such items are taken by customs police and “kella t’ebaqi” (guards of toll booth) and misused by the police and the toll booth keepers (1992: 260 - 264).

There are also no democracy within the army. For example, Colonel Jigsa, a character in *Anguz* gets executed, only because he passes the request of armyman to the concerned higher officials (*Anguz*, 1992: 380 - 384). The soldiers requested to get some rest for they had fought for more than ten years, since the Somali invasion.

The experience of the character, Colonel Jigsa, is arguably a representation of a real life experience that happened in the Darg period. History has witnessed that the Darg executed more than 20 generals and other lower officials and soldiers during its crises in the northern war fronts among which General Tariku Ayne is notable (Bahru, 2002a: 264; Gebru, 2002: 482, 483). The generals were used as scapegoats. Otherwise, some of them were respected leaders of the army. As mentioned earlier, the novel, *Anguz*, is dedicated to General Tariku Ayne and others who were executed by the Darg. In the novel, the statement: “ጆግና ታሪኩ አይሞትም” (“*jägina tariku ayimotim*”) which literally means ‘a hero will not die; it lives always within the heart and mind of the people’, might represent the real General **Tariku**, which in turn leads to think that the character, Colonel Jigsa represents the real General Tariku. In other words, the noun phrase in the above sentence, “tariku”, might indicate the name of the general, Tariku).

Anguz’s representation of the undemocratic nature of the Darg in such a realistic and bold manner was possible, perhaps because the novel was written in the post-1991 period. The situations are represented explicitly and implicitly; explicitly, through the dialogues and actions of characters, and implicitly, through the interpretation of the relationships between the opposition parties and characters. Some events are also represented using tropes like the narration dealing with the General.

Corruption is represented in *Yäqäy Kokob T'irri*. One of the female characters in the novel, Finot, got the chance to be employed after she had sex with the friend of the personnel of the Ministry of the Information and the personnel who is known by his nick name, 'Shefo', himself. She continued to have sex with the 'Shefo' without her will, until she was employed on permanent basis (1980: 89). Likewise, Deribe gets employed in the same institution through Getachew, the brother of the landlady, Amsale, and the personnel (1980: 59). He served the personnel by spying workers until he became a permanent employee (1980: 62 - 63).

The issue of corruption is also treated in *Maibäl Yabiyot Mäbača* and *Maibäl Yabiyot Magüst*. Zeleqa becomes a member of one of the Darg parties and gets an apartment that is reserved for members because of her lover who is a Darg member. The kebeles are also portrayed as corrupt. For instance, the Kebele detains Zerfeshiwal only because the kebele chairman is bribed; and then the Kebele frees the same lady because a higher official gives an order.

Anguz (1992) also reflects corruption through the experiences of characters called Kebede, Belachew and the purchaser. It is also found in the war fronts and hospitals as could be understood from the dialogues of the characters. Kebede, the antagonist character, is portrayed as the most corrupt individual. In the story, Kebede was at first a cart driver; but, soon he joins the revolutionary guards and ultimately becomes chairman of a higher Kebele. Following this, the life of Kebede changes - he owns a big building material shop; he builds a G + 1 house, and buys two cars, one for himself and another for his wife. Kebede used his position to accumulate wealth; he was an illiterate person who only survived in cart driving. Concerning such corruption, Belachew, who was a friend of Kebede and a revolutionary guard says (1982: 212):

የብሄራዊ ውትድርና ምልመላ ሰሞን ሁለት ነገር ይዞልን ይመጣል።
አንደኛው በጥቆማም በአሰሳም ልጁን ለግዳጅ ያሳለፍንበት ሁሉ ጠላት
ያደርገናል። ሁለተኛ እባክህ ልጄን፤ ወንድሜን ከምልመላው ሰውርልኝ
ወይም ሰርዝልኝ ባዮች ምናምን ይሉናል። አንዳንዴ ጠቀም ያለ ነገር
ይገኛል። እኔ እንኳን ነገሩን ብቃወምም ጥለውብህ አልቅሰውብህ ይሄዳሉ።
እና ሰሞኑን ኪሴ ምናምን አላጣም።

[The calling up for conscription has resulted in two things. One is that those parents whose children are taken as conscripts make us enemies. Secondly,

some parents bribe us to free their sons from the military service. Sometimes, we get something significant. Some of them insist even when we resist to take bribe. Therefore, my pocket is full these days.]

Like the Kebele workers, some workers of other organizations are also corrupt. For instance, Kebede orders the purchase of 300 pieces of corrugated metals through a purchaser of an organization engaged in black market. The purchaser bribed his chiefs to get the position of a purchaser, which enables him to have a lot of money. He owns two taxis and a sweater factory bought from the black market business (1992: 198 - 199).

Some doctors and nurses are also portrayed as corrupt professionals for their unequal treatment of people (1992: 219, 221 - 222). For instance, Aregash overheard two women saying that either money or relation is essential for someone to be visited by the doctors and specialists (1992: 219). Aregash also heard two people discussing that some doctors paid more attention to patients who come to their private clinics rather than those they visit public hospitals.

Like the other novels, *Oromay* also portrays the prevalence of corruption. According to Dawit (1989) and Bealu (1983: 119 - 121), the reasons for many Eritreans to join and support the rebels were related to corruption. The Darg officials and the military personnel worked for their own selfish motives rather than for the people. They committed crime against civilians; they seized private property illegally; they raped women. During the Red Star Campaign, some officials like the aviation man character, Tadese Qoricho, are found working for TPLF for money (*Oromay*, 1983: 367). Some military officers are bribed to work as double agents for TPLF, as read in *Oromay* (1983: 186 - 187).

Inequality among people is also a topic that is dealt with in some of the novels. In the novel, *Yäqäy Kokob T'irri*, Amsale has power over her husband for she is from the nobility, while her husband does not by birth belong to her class (the class difference here serves as background to the characters). He was an ordinary lawyer before their marriage; therefore, she has superiority complex over him. It might be this feeling which makes her take the initiative to express her sexual desire for sex to her husband (1980: 5 - 18). In the Ethiopian culture, the common experience is that men rather than women who push their partner to sex.

Amsale, the landlady character in *Yäqäy Kokob T'irri*, does not believe that all men are equal. For example, she supports Endalkachew's cabinet rather than Aklilu's because the former is from the aristocratic class by birth (1980: 50). She is also heard saying that Deribe, her former servant, like the other poor is changed after he heard such concepts like freedom and equality, and consequently, she decides to dismiss him from his job (1980: 56).

In connection to religion, Hirut, a character who claims to fight for the freedom of people and for democracy under her political organization, EPRP, ridicules a demonstration that was held to ask the equality of Muslims, saying: "What kind of demonstration...in an island of the country of the Christians?" (1980: 53). In reality, the Muslims demanded for religious equality, and to stop government interference in the religious affairs of the Muslims (Bahru, 2002a: 231). Hirut's reaction to the news of the demonstration exposed her real belief even in spite of being a member of a political group struggling for democracy and equality.

In *Yäqäy Kokob T'irri*, the autorial narrator (which might represent the author) promotes equality, and condemns racial complexity, but he commits a mistake by using a derogatory word, "ገረዳትዋ" ("gäräditwa") to refer to Deribe's house maid (1980: 86) instead of saying "የቤት ሰራተኛዋ" ("yäbet säratäñawa") or other polite topical word. The word "ገረድ" ("gäräd") is derogatory for it undermines people. Since the 1974 revolution, the term has been considered as an insult; people rather use the term "yäbet säratäña" to refer to a person who works for another person as a house maid. This is an example of how words reveal the kind of power relations. (Wodak, 2002: 10). Such an interpretation reveals that the political and social context in which the novel is read, or the reading takes place, has impact on the understanding of the reader and the novel (Tyson, 2006: 294 - 295). In *Oromay*, inequalities are related to hierarchies of the Darg officials and the army at large. There are also inequalities between the leaders and the ordinary members of EPLF.

Furthermore, the Eritreans usually insult the other ethnic people of Ethiopia as ‘

አድጊ’ ('adgi') [donkey]. For instance, Seelay, a TPLF man who was in charge of Oromay, the counter operation campaign to the Red Star Multifaceted Campaign,

heard insulting the Ethiopian soldiers saying (1983: 147), “ያሁኑ አድጊዎች የድሮዎች አይነት አይደሉም” [These donkeys are not the same as the old donkeys].

With regard to gender inequality, Fiameta says that Amhara men, like the Italians respect women. She insists that the Amharas are not like Tegres who do not care for their women. They don’t respect them, and administer them harshly (1984: 356).

Unlike most of the other novels, *T’amra T’or* represents love and mutual respect among different ethnic groups. In the novel, the protagonists, Berihun and Asegid, who are probably Amharas, work together with mutual respect with the Ethiopian Somali people, like Ismail, Hamid, Alis, Haji Godani, and with Anebo, who is from Kefa Keficho.

5. 3. Conclusion

In this chapter, the political events represented in the selected six novels have been analyzed and interpreted in five categories. Attempt was made to relate the analysis and interpretation in this chapter with the preceding chapter. Accordingly, some generalizations and conclusions are drawn.

Most of the selected novels reflected on the revolution itself and the rule of the Darg and some of its actions like the nationalization of land and extra city houses, the power competitions between different political parties and the Red Terror. Class relationships between the peasantry and the landladies are in most cases reflected in retrospect, as introductions to the main stories and for characterization. The major political events reflected in the novels focus on power competitions among different political parties, the Red Terror, corruption and lack of democracy. The specific focus of *Oromay* is the Red Star Multifaceted Campaign, while *T’amra T’or* mainly deals with the war between Ethiopia and Somalia.

After the Red Star Multifaceted Campaign, the Darg was preoccupied with the establishment of socialist Ethiopia. To achieve this goal, it first established the Provisional Office for Mass Organizational Affairs. Then, the Darg founded the Commission for Organizing the Workers’ Party of Ethiopia (COPWE), which later became Workers Party of Ethiopia (WPE) with Mengestu as its chairman (Marcus, 1994: 207; Bahru, 2002a: 256). Following this, the People’s Democratic Republic of

Ethiopia was proclaimed (Marcus, 1994: 211; 2002: 256). Meanwhile, the changes in international politics with the introduction of 'perestroika' and 'glasnost' spearheaded by Mikhail Gorbachev affected Mengestu and his party. Then, the Mengesetu government made some policy changes lately (Marcus, 1994: 214 - 215), when mixed economy was introduced in 1990 by the 11th plenum of the central committee of WPE (Bahru, 2002a: 264). But, this did not save Mengestu and its party from failure, because the insurgents like EPRDF and EPLF won surprising victories over the Darg forces. Most of these political events have not been the subjects of the novels discussed in this chapter, because the selected novels focused on the early years of the Darg government, where as most of these events occurred towards the end of the Darg period (of course, some of the issues like the formations of the Provisional Office for Mass Organizational Affairs, the Commission for Organizing the Workers' Party of Ethiopia are reflected in some of the novels only briefly, with little depth (*Oromay*, 1983: 53-54, 121)).

In most of the novels of the Darg period, the ruling class of the Imperial period is represented by landladies. The landladies are widows who get married to a broker or lawyer or office worker whose business is related to land. It was not only in the post revolution novels, but also in some pre-revolution novels like *Adäfris* that the ruling class was represented by landladies.

The landladies are portrayed as sex maniacs. Zerfeshiwal in *Maibäl Yabiyot Mäbača* and *Maibäl Yabiyot Magist* and her daughter, Zeleqa, are portrayed as characters who make love to different people. Amsale, in *Yäqäy Kokob T'irri* has a strong desire for sex that could even be aroused during difficult times. The reason for the portrayal of the women in such a way seems to be a mock on the landladies. Besides, the sexual relationships of the landladies with the different characters arguably reveal the concealed superiority complex of the women. These landladies are so sexy tht they perform the act even outside marriage.

In the novels, parties that opposed the Darg are categorized as reactionaries. Their members are categorized either as aristocrats or their descendants. This perhaps happened because the novelists were loyal to the Darg government. It is unlikely that all the members of the different parties, in reality belonged to the upper class.

Among the six novels discussed in the chapter, four of them favour the Darg in their representations of the political events, while two of them are its critique. Among the critique novels, *Anguz* was published after the fall of the Darg regime, while *Oromay* was published during the contemporary Darg period. It is likely because of his criticism of the regime that the author of *Oromay* disappeared. Bealu Girma was an apologist in *Yäqäy Kokob T'irri*, but became a critique in *Oromay* (Taddesse, 1995).

The selected six novels (for the discussion of the politics of the Darg government) are critiques of the Imperial regime, but most of them supported the Darg. It was unthinkable to write and publish a novel that supported the government of Haileselassie and critiqued the Darg government contemporarily. Such a novel would surely be banned, and the author detained or executed, like what happened to Bealu. It is no wonder that a number of critique novels that dealt with Red Terror were published after the fall of the Darg. It reminds us about the words of Hollander (1976: 217) in which he explains that art could be subordinated to politics in various ways. The rulers can simply proscribe the intrusion of ideas they consider undesirable, and can also prevent the writers' political ideas from gaining literary expression.

In this way, the Darg permitted the publication of novels that supported the Red Terror. *Yäqäy Kokob T'irri*, *Maibäl Yabiyot Mäbača* and *Maibäl Yabiyot Magist* were examples in this regard. The situations further proved the influence of the politics on the literature. The assertion by Hollander (1976: 216) that the rulers of thoroughly politicized societies are determined to use the arts and literature in particular as an arm in the propaganda process in order to solidify their power holds true with the novels discussed so far.

As far as the manner of representations is concerned, symbolic representations were observed in *Maibäl Yabiyot Mäbača* and *Maibäl Yabiyot Magist*. As discussed previously (refer to section 5.2.2.) Kassahun, who was the supporter of the revolution, thought that he was impotent at the beginning, and then became aware that he was potent towards the end of the story, symbolizes the success of the revolution. The disappearance in the desert of the two landladies, Zerfeshiwal and Shewaye, who were against the revolution, could also be a symbolic representation of the final doom of the aristocracy. Likewise, the disappearance of the moon in the heavy cloud and Deribe's over hearing of the wedding song just at the time of Hirut's death, his

memorization of Nikoli Astroviski's words, at that spot, could be symbolic representations of being free from dilemma of a divided commitment. After Hirut's death, deribe became free and ready to serve the revolution in one heart and mind (see details for all these cases in 5.2.2). Symbolic representations also found in *Oromay* and *Anguz*. The novels of the Darg period, unlike the pre 1974 novels use symbols for artistic purposes rather than as escaping mechanisms from censorship.

Unlike the the pre 1974 novels, the novels written during the Darg period do not use biblical references as manner of representations. The reason might be that the Darg system and the discursive practices followed Marxism, which did not encourage religion and worship. Unlike the Darg, the Haileselassie government encouraged religion. Most of the pre 1974 period novelists received church education and this background could have influenced their writing in terms of content and form.

Bloodline and ethnic inequalities were not touched in the novels of the Darg period, except for some incidences in *Oromay* where superiority complexity of Eritreans over non-Eritreans is expressed. The reason for the absence of representations of such kind of inequalities might be that the government/or the people did not encourage racial and ethnic differences.

Corruption is among some of the most represented political events in the post revolution novels than the pre 1974 novels. Corruption is rampant in government offices, in the army, in Kebeles, hospitals, private enterprises. The reason for the widespread of corruption in the society during the Darg period might be a result of the moral and religious decadence of the society and the economic and social bankruptcy and psychological instability of the people that the politic had exerted.

Competitions for power between different political groups were observed in the post 1974 novels, while it was nil in the pre revolution novels. The competitions reflected in the novels of the Darg period were held between different political organizations and the Darg government. But in the pre 1974 novels, there were no considerable representations of power competitions, except that there were forecasted coups and some disagreements that existed between the war-lords. A sense of competition, animosity, disrespect and suspicion between different political organizations and groups were also observed in the post 1974 novels, with the exception of *T'amra*

T'or, which reflects the love and respect of different ethnic groups during crises, as in what happened during the Somali invasion.

Unlike the Red Terror inspired novels published in the Darg period, a number of critique novels that deal with the subject were published in the post Darg period. The Red Terror inspired novels published in the Darg period were not critical of the event.

Some of the selected pre 1974 novels showed the problems that existed during the period, and suggested alternative solutions to the problems, as observed in *Ariäya* and *Aliwäladim*. The novels preached the need for investments, the right to share resources, and the rights of workers. These situations reflected the power that literature has in shaping society and context (Brannigan, 2001:169-170). But, contrary to what happened during the Imperial period, most of the post revolution novels mainly dealt with the problems of the previous regime, and with contemporary problems related to the groups that the Darg classified as reactionaries, anarchists, and external enemies. They did not either suggest significant solutions to problems, for they did not dare to show the weak sides of the Darg government - thus, showing that they were more apologists rather than critiques.

Finally, from the analyses and interpretations made in this and the previous chapters, we can understand that literary discourses are closely integrated to other fields and contexts. The literature could not be understood in isolation from the cultural, political, historical contexts and the discursive practices. The literature, like any other discourses, represented power relationships between different entities.

The literary texts further revealed concealed power relationships that could be observed or constructed in the process of reading. For instance, most of the novels selected for the study in this chapter reflected the changes that the Darg brought and the victory it got over rival parties, which most of the novels considered as reactionaries, anarchists and secessionists. Yet, the literary discourses indirectly revealed the undemocratic nature of the Darg and the dictatorial nature of Mengestu, who ruled the nation for 17 years. Therefore, the literary texts were significant in understanding history. It was for this reason that Gebru (2002) constantly referred to the novel, *Oromay*, as a source to his historical research entitled “From Lash to Red Star: the Pitfalls of Counter-Insurgency in Ethiopia”.

The unbalanced and partial representations of politics of the Darg could also be an indication of the concealed political power relationships. The novelists were not courageous enough to critique the Darg even on issues that it should have been criticized. The Darg was always correct; and its rivals were always wrong. Such kinds of representations might reveal some kinds of mistrust in the political relationships; or it is simply loyalty to the ruling class. In addition to this, polarization of characters i.e. portrayals of the landladies, the aristocrats, the rival parties like the EPRP, EDU, AESM as completely evil, reactionary, sex maniac and power mongers, selfish, and traditional, and conversely the representation of the Darg as progressive, democrat, and patriotic and honest are further representations of mistrust in the political relationships, and are additional proofs to the loyalty of the authors.

It is also possible to understand the power of language in revealing hidden personalities of characters, and relationships of power. This could be observed, for instance, in *Yäqäy Kokob T'irri* where the true personality of Hirut is revealed as regards inequality of religions and the way the narrator addresses the 'maid' (see part 5.2.5).

The representation of national and state politics through ordinary characters at a micro level, instead of using big political figures at a macro level (as was done in *Oromay*) also reveals distrust and doubt on the part of the authors. One of the potential reasons for this was the insecurity of the novelists. They did not want to be jailed and, therefore, preferred to represent micro level issues.

We could also see that the bi-directional nature of power relationships have been presented through the interactions of characters, and the acts of political groups, and countries. In *Anguz*, Senait was not submissive to her enemies. She avenged the revolutionary guards of the kebele, Kebede and Belachew, who killed her father and brothers. In *Oromay*, the TPLF designed a counter attack program against the Red Star Multifaceted Revolutionary Campaign. The Somali army which invaded the former Haregrge region was not wel-comed by the Ethiopians. It was defeated by the Ethiopian Army after a bloody battle.

In general, the analyses and investigations made on the novels revealed various political events of the Darg period, both explicitly and implicitly. The manners in

which the representations were made helped to identify the influence of the politics and the discursive practice on the literature, and the influence of literature on the context.

Chapter Six

Analyses and Interpretations of the Political Events of the EPRDF Period in the Selected Amharic Novels: 1991 - 2010.

6.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the analyses and interpretations of data on the representations of the politics of the Ethiopian Peoples Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) in three selected novels, written by two authors. The novels are *Yäburqa Zimīta* (2000) by Tesfaye Gebreab and *Dertogada* (2009) and *Ramatohara* (2010) by Yismaeke Worku. The chapter has two sections, the discussion and conclusion.

Like the analyses made in the preceding three chapters, the analyses in this chapter answer the research questions in the respective context. Moreover, the analyses and interpretations identify the trend observed in the representation of politics in Amharic novels along all the years, looking into the commonalities and differences with regard to the political representations during the three different periods.

Yäburqa Zimīta (2000) has been selected because it deals mainly with the politics of the armed struggle of EPRDF, ethnic politics, the conflicts and some of the ethnic-based political parties. The author, Tesfaye, was a member of the Darg army before he was captured by the EPRDF fighters and served in the propaganda section of the party. After victory, he worked as a press officer of the government of the EPRDF (Tesfaye, 2009). Therefore, Tesfaye obviously had first hand experience of the political events of the Darg and the EPRDF governments. He was witness to the war held at some war fronts like Debretabor (where he was taken captive by the EPRDF guerrilla fighters), and some of the wars conducted after he joined the EPRDF and the political events that happened after victory (*Yägazet'ännaw Mastawäša*, 2009). With regard to reflections based on self experiences of authors and its impact on their literary works (like Tesfaye did in *Yäburqa Zimīta*), Bertens (2001: 185) states, “the ideological constructions that authors live in, and have internalized, inevitably become part of their work, which is therefore always political and always a vehicle for power”. Likewise, in Bourdieu’s (Johnson, 1993: 4-9) term, the *habitus* of the author, i.e. the experiences that the author gained through interactions and expositions

to different groups has influence on the literary text i.e. the novel. The life that Tesfaye lived in could be reflections of what he witnessed in the novel, *Yäburqa Zimīta*, which the author himself classifies as a historical novel (2000, internal cover page).

Dertogada (2009) and *Ramatohara* (2010) have been selected because they deal with the airlifting of the Beta Israel (Ethiopian Jews) from Ethiopia to Israel through the ‘Moses’ and ‘Solomon’ Operations and the life and experience of the politics of Kitaw Ejigu (chairman of the Ethiopian National United Front (ENUF)). The novels further touch on the aborted London agreement, the flight of Mengestu to Zimbabwe, the 2005 election, and the politics of investment.

6.2. Discussion

The political events represented in the three novels are discussed in six sub topics: the war between the insurgents and the Darg government, the airlifting of the Beta Israel people from Ethiopia to Israel through ‘Moses’ and ‘Solomon’ operations, problems of ethnicity, the election of 2005, the political parties and Ethiopian nationalism; Criticizing the past, and democracy, inequality and corruption (Background explanations of these political events have been given in the chapter dealing with the context of the study, under 2.3.2.3).

6.2.1. The War between the Insurgents and the Darg Government

The armed struggle between the EPRDF and the Darg government has not been represented in almost all the novels written during the Darg period, perhaps because of censorship and self-censorship. The only exception is *Oromay*, which reasonably deals with the armed struggle of the EPLF where the Red Star Revolutionary Multifaceted Campaign which aimed at wiping out the EPLF and other rival fronts for good. These issues of the EPLF have been already dealt with in chapter five (see 5.2.4.).

The struggle between the Darg and the opposition forces (like EPLF and EPRDF) is represented in *Yäburqa Zimīta* published in the EPRDF period. The struggle that took place between the government forces and the insurgents is presented through two major characters called Hawini and Anole. The armed struggle of the EPRDF is reflected through the interaction that takes place between Hawini and members of the

EPRDF, who met this female character when she was trying to leave the country via Gojam to Sudan and then Germany. She then changed her mind and joined the EPRDF, first as a historian and later on as a guerrilla fighter. Hawini decided to leave the country after she was jailed for a year in Gondar, without any justification (2000: 124). The representation of the armed struggle of the EPRDF in *Yäburqa Zimäta* therefore begins since the time Hawini joined the front. Hawini worked as a historian, a video camerawoman and a guerrilla fighter in some of the operations. She was involved in the war held in northern Shawa, a place called Meragna. The war was designed to crush the highly experienced army division named ‘Anbesaw’ (The Lion), which the Darg government was proud of. The tactic that was used in the war is explained by the narrator in the following extract (2000: 250-252):

ሀዊኒ ታጋይ ሆናለች። ለመጀመሪያ ጊዜ በውጊያ የተሳተፈችው ሰሜን ሸዋ ላይ “አንበሳው” ሶስተኛ ክፍለጦር ሲደመሰስ ነበር። ... ለሚ ላይ የ203ኛ አየር ወለድ በአውራሮ፤ በመቅደላና በላባደር ክፍለ ሰራዊቶች ሲመታ ነበር አንበሳውና ሌሎች ጥቂት የደርግ ሀይሎች ወደ ሰሜን ሸዋ የተንቀሳቀሱት። አንበሳው በጉጉፍ በኩል አድርጎ ካራምሽግ አካባቢ ሰፈረ። አሳቡ የሀየሎምን ክፍለ ሰራዊት ጨፍልቆ አለም ከተማን ለመቆጣጠር ነበር። በሀየሎም የሚመራው የታጋዮች ሰራዊት ውጊያ ላይ ስለሰነበተ በቀጥታ ከአንበሳው ጋር ብቻውን መላተም አልፈለገም። አንበሳው ገፍቶ እንዳይሄድና መላወሻ እንዳያገኝ ግን ዘግቶ ያዘው።

ደርግ አጥብቆ የሚመካበት ሶስተኛው አንበሳ ክፍለጦር መራኛ ሲገባ ከጀርባው እንዳይቆረጥ ጥንቃቄ ተደርጎ ነበር። አጅባር ከተባለ ስፍራ የአንበሳውን ጀርባ የሚጠብቅ ሀይል ተመደበ። ይህን የተገነዘቡት የኢህአዴግ ኮማንደሮች ሃይላቸውን ወደ አጅባር አነቃነቁ። አጅባር ያለው የደርግ ሃይል ከተመታ የአንበሳው ጀርባ እርቃኑን እንደሚቀር ተረድተው ነበር። አሉላ፣ አግአዚና አቃቂ ክፍለ ሰራዊቶች ወደ አጅባር ተወርውረው በአንድ ቀን ውጊያ የአንበሳውን ጀርባ ጠባቂ ሀይል ድምጥማጡን አጠፉት። በነጋታው ጉጉፍ የነበረውን የደርግ ሀይል ደመሰሱት። መራኛ ተከበበ። አንበሳው ከቶ መሸሽ በማይችልበት ቀለበት ውስጥ ገባ።

[Hawini has already become a guerrilla fighter. She fought for the first time in northern Shawa, in the battle in which the 3rd army division of ‘Anbesaw’ was crushed....The ‘Anbesaw’ division and some other troops of the Darg came to northern Shawa when the 203 division of the Airborne was defeated by the army divisions of the EPRDF, Awraro, Meqdela and Labader. The Anbesaw 3rd army division came via Guguf and settled around Karamishig. Its aim was to control the town of Alam after dismantling the guerrilla fighters which were led by Hayelom. Hayelom’s army was not interested to fight against ‘Anbesaw’ for it was busy fighting in other battles. However, Hayelom’s army stopped the 3rd division ‘Anbesaw’ army from pushing ahead.

When the ‘Anbesaw’ army division, which the Darg was confident of, marched to the place called Meragna, great care was taken to protect it from being attacked from behind by the EPRDF guerrilla fighters. Accordingly, at a place called Ajibar, a military force was given task to protect the ‘Anbesaw’ army. The commanders of the EPRDF became aware of this situation and moved their army to Ajibar. They were sure that ‘Anbesaw’ army would be exposed to attack from its back if the Darg army in Ajibar is first dismissed. Accordingly, the EPRDF army divisions called, Alula, Agazi, and Aqaqi marched to Ajibar and dismissed the Darg army which was supposed to protect the ‘Anbesaw’ army at Ajibar. On the second day, they crushed the Darg army which was placed at Guguf. Then, Meragna was encircled by EPRDF forces; the ‘Anbesaw’ division army was put in a ring, and could not escape.]

There are also experiences of the front that are reflected retrospectively through Hawini’s interviews with some guerrilla fighters about Hayelom, one of the real life guerrilla leaders of the EPRDF. Accordingly, the historical operations of *Agazi*, *Bäsälam Bätigil*, *Fana Ihadig*, *Tewodros* and *Waläliñe* are represented in the novel (2000). Agazi operation is reflected in retrospect through the interview that Hawini had with the operation leader, Hayelom, with some guerrilla fighters who were freed by the operation, and with those who were involved in the operation. EPRDF’s attack on the Mekele prison to free the prisoners is read in the following extract (263 - 264):

በአንድ ጊዜ አምስቱም የወህኒ በሮች ላይ ተኩስ ተከፈተ። ዘበኞቹ አምስቱ መውጫያ ላይ ሆነው መትረየሶቻቸውን እንደጠመዱ ነበር በሩቅ ጥበቃ የሚያካሂዱት። ወህኒ ቤቱ መካከላቸው ነው ያለው። ተኩሱ ሲጀመር እንግዲህ እነኚህ መትረየስ የያዙት የደርግ ወታደሮች በእር ፒጂና መትረየስ በተተኮሰ ጥይት ባንዴ ተመቱ። ለተወሰነ ጊዜ የተንጣጡት መትረየሶች ጸጥ አሉ። ሁዋላ የቀሩት ክላሽንና ኤም - 14 ነበሩ። እነሱም በእጅ በእጅ ውጊያ ተጠግተው ተኩስ ከፈቱባቸው። ውጊያው በአስራሁለት ደቂቃ ውስጥ ተጠናቀቀ።

...ወህኒ ቤቱን የተቆጣጠሩት ሰዎች ባጠቃላይ ስድሳ ስምንት ይሆኑ ነበር። ከነዚህ በተጨማሪ ደግሞ አስራ ስድስት ሰዎች የያዙት አንዲት ጉዋድ ለማደናገር መናጋሪያ የሚባለውንና አውቶቡሶች የመንግስት መኪናዎች የሚያሰባስቡባትን ቦታ እንድታጠቃ አድርገን ነበር። በአዲጉዶም መስመር የመጣችው ቡድንም በተመሳሳይ በሩቅ ተኩስ ከፈተች። ይገኝ ታዲያ ጠላት ተኩስ ወዴት እንደሆነ እንኩዋን መረዳት አልቻለም። የታችኛው ወደላይኛው መልእክት እስኪያስተላልፍ ከአስራ አምስት ደቂቃ በላይ አለፈ።

... ነጻ ካወጣናቸው አንድ ሺህ ሶስት መቶ እስረኞችም ግማሹ ከኛ ጋር ሲቀላቀሉ፤ የቀሩት ግን ወደ ሱዳን ሄዱ።

[Firing started on all the five gates of the prison at the same time. The guards with machine guns were watching from a distance in all the five gates. The

prison was found at the centre. When the attack started, these guards were shot by RPG and Machine guns. The machine guns of the prison guards were silenced. Only, the guards with Kalashnikov and M-14 rifles were remaining. The guerrilla fighters came forward and fought them hand for hand. The battle was completed within twelve minutes.

The number of guerrilla fighters who attacked the prison was sixty eight. Meanwhile a group of sixteen guerrilla fighters were attacking the bus station and the park which was giving service for government vehicles. Another group from the direction of Adigudom opened fire from a distance. The enemy was bewildered. They could not even understand the direction of the shots. Fifteen minutes passed until the information reached the Generals.

... Of the one thousand three hundred freed prisoners, some joined our organization, and some others went to the neighbouring country, Sudan.]

In *Yäburqa Zimīta*, the formation and the struggle of the EPLF are reflected in the interactions of Anole, one of the major characters, with the EPLF people such as Abrha, Roza and four other political experts of the government army. The dialogues reflect some points such as the federation and the unification of Eritrea with Ethiopia, the history of the armed struggle of the different political groups of Eritrea in reaction to the unification of the country to Ethiopia, and the strengths and weaknesses of the EPLF (2000: 177 - 185).

Eventhough Anole was sent to Asmara by the Darg government to study the psychology of the Eritrean people, the prisoners and the army, he was cheated by Shabia (EPLF) and decided to run away from the Darg. Tricked by the EPLF, Anole was asked to cooperate with Abrha Tselote, one important EPLF member, in escaping from prison; and the front, in turn, agreed to help Anole safely go to Germany via Sudan. Anole helped Abrha in escaping from prison; but he did not go to Germany as promised; instead, he stayed with the Shabia Army; and when the EPLF and TPLF entered Asmara and Addis Ababa respectively, he came back to Addis Ababa and organized his own rebel group (2000: 206 - 247).

Tesfaye's novel, *Yäburqa Zimīta*, shows how the two groups of armed opposition (TPLF and EPLF) cooperated in a series of battles. For instance, the military support that the TPLF gave to EPLF is recounted by the character, Fiqre, in the following way (2000: 110):

ደርግ በቀይ ኮከብ ዘመቻ ሻክሊያን ሙሉ በሙሉ ለመደምሰስ ቆርጦ የተነሳ ጊዜ ሻክሊያን ለማገዝ ከተጉዋዘው የህወሀት የታጋዮች ሃይል ጋር እኔም አብሬ ተጉገፎ ነበር... ደርግ ናቅፋን መቆጣጠር አቅቷት በካልቶ ተጠልዛ አናትዋን ተኮርኩማ ወደመጣችበት ከተመለሰች በሁዋላ እኛም ግዳጃችንን በተገቢው መንገድ ፈጻጽመን መልስ ወደ ትግራይ ሆነ።

[I am one of the TPLF members who went to Eritrea to give military support during the Red Star Multifaceted Campaign in which the Darg designed to wipe out the EPLF for good.... We returned to Tigray after we accomplished our task. The Darg failed to control Naqfa and retreated to where it came from.]

The TPLF helped the EPLF because right from the beginning TPLF was “pro-Eritrean independence” (Paulos, 2003:13). The TPLF which was primarily founded to fight for the independence of Tigray, rather than the liberation of Ethiopia from military dictatorship also in need of the military assistance from the EPLF because it needs the experience of the EPLF. This political stand of the TPLF was not changed until 1984 (Paulos, 2003:13).

Yäburqa Zimīta further reflects some other military operations and political matters of EPRDF. For instance, the critical situation that was created when Addis Ababa was surrounded by the EPRDF army and the squad leaders of the time are described in the novel (2000: 291):

የአዲስ አበባ በሮች በታጋዮች ታጥረዋል። አዲስ አበባን የከበበውን ጦር አማክለው የሚመሩት ማዘግጠ ጣቢያቸውን ለገዳዲ ላይ ያደረጉት ጸድቃን ገብረተንሳኤና አበበ ተክለሃይማኖት(ጆቤ) ነበሩ። ታምራት ላይኔ መለስ ዜናዊን ተክቶ በበላይነት ይመራል። በየበሮቹ ያሉት የኢህአዴግ ከፍተኛ አመራር አበላት የመጨረሻዋን መመሪያ ከሰገዳዲ ይጠብቃሉ። በደብረዘይት መንገድ ሳሞራ የኑስና በረከት ስምኦን በአምቦ ሃየሎም አርአያና አለም ሰገድ ገብረ አምላክ በሰንዳፋ ምግብና ገብረኪዳን እንዲሁም የማእከላዊ ኮሚቴ አባላት አዲስ አበባን አሻግረው እያማተሩ የጦር መገናኛ ፊደሮናቸውን ከበዋል።

ስዬ አብርሃ ትግራይ - ሀገረ ሰላም ነበር። መለስ ዜናዊ ለንደን። በአሜሪካ የውጭ ጉዳይ መስሪያ ቤት የአፍሪካ ጉዳይ ሃላፊ ሚስተር ቦርማን ኮሆን ደርግ፣ ኢህአዴግና ኦነግን ለማደራደር በጠራው ስብሰባ ላይ ለመገኘት ከትግራይ በረሀ ወደ ለንደን አቅንቶ እዚያው ነበር። ስዬ ከሰገዳዲና ከሰንደን ያለማቁዋረጥ ግንኙነት ያደርጋል። አይሮፕላኖች አዲሳባ ላይ እንዳያርፉና ካዲሳባም እንዳይነሱ የኢህአዴግ መሪዎች ጥብቅ ትዕዛዝ በመስጠታቸው እያንዳንድዋ ደቂቃ ትንፋሽ ታሳጥራለች። የአለም ሚዲያ ትኩረት አዲስ አበባ ዙሪያ ላይ አነጣጥሯል።

[Addis Ababa is encircled by the guerrilla fighters. The fighters that encircled the city are led by Tsadqan Gebretensae and Abebe Teklehaymanot (Jobe) who were stationed at a place called Legedadi. Tamrat Layne is the general leader representing Meles Zenawi. Every front leader of the EPRDF is waiting for order from the main office, Legedadi. Samora Yenus and Bereket Simon are along the Debre Zeit road; Hayelom, Alemseged, Migbe and Gebrekidan are along Sendafa; and other central committee members of the EPRDF are looking to Addis Ababa from a distance waiting for radio messages.

Siye Abrha was at that time in Hagere Selam, in the province of Tigray; Melese in London. He went to London to attend a meeting called by Herman Cohen, the U.S. State Department's chief of African affairs, for a dialogue to be made between the Darg, EPRDF and OLF. Siye is a continuous contact with Melese and the commanders in Legedadi. No airplane is allowed to land or take off from Addis Ababa; each minute is breathtaking. The focus of the world media is in Addis Ababa.]

The names of the guerrilla leaders, the American official who was in charge of the aborted agreement, and the entire explanation of the situation in the quotation are realistic and can be verified using historical and political documents. These political situations are reflected in the novel in retrospect, as the novel was published in 2000.

The second novel, *Dertogada*, briefly deals with the war held between the Darg and TPLF/EPRDF, and also the secret exodus of Beta Israel (Ethiopian Jews) in operation Moses. Operation Moses is represented in the novel through the experiences of two characters, Sipara and Aba Finhas, one of whom (Sipara) goes with the other Beta Israel people to Israel. The operation is conducted by taking advantage of the war held between the Darg government and the insurgents. Israel took an advantage of the situation and transported many Ethiopian Jews in a short period of time.

The politics of the war is further reflected using two characters, Miraj and Jangida. These two characters met for the first time at the war front; both had joined the Darg army as recruits of the national military service. They were conscripted from the streets and homes without their will. Jangida, a medical graduate, was taken by the 'Kebele' officials while celebrating his graduation. Miraj was found in the street for he had no where to go after escaping from a monastery when his love affair with Sipara was exposed. The two characters, Miraj and Jangida, deserted the army because they were not pleased with the deeds of the military. Some of the government soldiers were undisciplined; they raped any woman, whether married or not. Miraj

and Jangida were sure that the Ethiopian army could not win the battle, because many like them were forced to join the army without their will in the pretext of national military service, and consequently, corruption and ill-behaviours became rampant in the army. The novel reflects this story (2009: 71 - 72):

ይሄ ሰራዊት አያሸንፍም። በውስጡ ብዙ ባለጌዎች አሉበት። ጦሩን አሰልፈው የሚያስጨርሱ ቅጥረኞች ተሰግስገውበታል። አሁን አነዚህ ደፋሪዎች ቅጥረኞች ላለመሆናቸው ምንም ማረጋገጫ የለንም። የገበሬ ሚስቶችና ልጃገረዶች እየተደፈሩ ነው። ጨዋዎችና የዋሆች እናቶቻችን እየተደፈሩ ነው። ወታደር እየተፈራረቀባቸው ደም የሚሸኑ ሴቶች አንገታቸውን ደፍተዋል። የካህን ሚስት ሳትቀር ቁሱ መስቀሉን ይዞ እየገዘተና እየተማጸነ ተደፍራለች። ሴት ተማሪዎችና የገበሬ ልጆች ያለ እድሜያቸው ልጅ አዝለዋል። ከፊሎቹ የማያውቁትን ወታደር ልጅ አርግዘዋል። ይህ ሁሉ እርግማንና እንባ የሚፈስበት ሠራዊት እንደሚሸነፍ ከወዲሁ መገመት አያዳግትም። የገበሬ ልጅና ተማሪ ታፍሶ ያለበቁ ሥልጠናና ስንቅ ወደ ጦር ግንባር እየተማገደ እንዴት ነው ድል የሚገኘው። በዚህ ሰራዊት ውስጥ እናት ሀገራቸውን ከገንጣዮች ለመታደግ የሚፋለሙት እጅግ በጣም ጥቂቶች ናቸው። ሀገሪቷም እነዚህን ጀግኖች በየጦር ግንባሩ እያጣች ነው። ጀግኖችና ሀቀኛ ልጆች ደማቸውን እያፈሰሱላት አድርባቸውና ቅጥረኞች የሚሾሙባት ናት ይህች አገር።

[This army can not win. There are many irresponsible soldiers in the army. There are many saboteurs who are responsible for the defeat and death of the different units of the army. How can we make sure whether these rapists are saboteurs or not? Wives and daughters of peasants are raped. Mothers and innocent women are raped. Gang raped women are urinating blood and have bowed their heads. Even the wife of a priest is raped while her husband condemns the act and tries to stop the soldier with the cross. Female students and daughters of peasants are made to have babies in their early childhood. Some of them are pregnant from a father soldier they do not know. It is not difficult to guess that such kind of an army could not be victorious in the war. How can victory be gained by such kind of an army composed of students and peasants forcibly taken from streets and inadequately trained? Among the soldiers, only few are genuinely fighting to save their country from secessionists. The worst thing is that the country is losing such genuine heroes in every battle. The country has become a place where saboteurs and opportunists reign at the expense of the sacrifice of the life of real and genuine heroes.]

The extract clearly shows that the army had gone out of control; it was not governed by rule and lacked discipline.

In general, we could say that the novels reflect historical and war incidents between the Darg and the EPRDF through different techniques like dialogues, narration, and

commentaries of characters. These discussions on the representations and reflections of the historical and political events in the novels magnify the understanding of the new historicist's concept of "textuality of history and historicity of texts" (Montrose as cited in Wolfrey, 2001:170; Lai, 2006: 2). The New historicists' belief that the novel, like any other text, is always imbedded in history has been reflected to be true in the context of this study.

6.2.2. The Airlifting of Beta Israelis through Moses and Solomon Operations

The Beta Israelis (see, 2.2.2.2.6 & foot note ix, p. 57) were airlifted through the *Moses*, *Sheba* and *Solomon* operations in the Darg period (Spector, 2005: 13). The first two operations were conducted during the war between the insurgents and the Darg as it was an opportune moment for Mosad to airlift the Beta Israelis to Israel via Sudan. The third operation, Operation Solomon was also conducted in May 1991 just before EPRDF took power. The then Ethiopian government, the Darg, was promised around 30,000,000 dollars to allow Israel airlift the Beta Israelis (Spector, 2005: 134) though the EPRDF was not unaware of the operation (Spector, 2005: 119). The EPRDF was stopped from entering Addis Ababa until Israel airlifted the Beta Israelis from Addis Ababa airport. It is for this reason that the different units of the EPRDF army were made to stay for long hours out of Addis Ababa until the operation was completed (Spector, 2005: 173, 185).

These political situations of the Beta Israelis are not represented in the novels of the Darg period, perhaps due to censorship and self-censorship. Some of the issues related to the operations are rather represented in the post-Darg novels, *Dertogada* and *Ramatohara*. Most of the representations of the politics are realistic and explicit. The politics of the operations are raised in both novels on different occasions, especially in the dialogues between characters and through story developments (for instance, *Dertogada*, 2009: 47 - 63; *Ramatohara*, 2010: 158 - 167).

The Moses operation is reflected in *Dertogada* through two characters, Aba Finhas and Sipara (2009: 33, 48 - 64). Aba Finhas and his daughter, Sipara, are from Beta Israel. Eventhough he was born in Ethiopia, Aba Finhas's heart has always been with his ancestors' land, Israel (2009: 48). Finhas and Sipara were smuggled during the Moses operation though Finhas died of snake bite during the journey (2009: 58). Nevertheless, Israel, in collaboration with CIA, was able to airlift thousands of

Ethiopian Jews from northern Ethiopia, i.e., Gondar via Sudan to Israel through what was called Operation Moses. The convenience of the time to carry out the operations is narrated as follows (2009: 50):

ወቅቱ ኢትዮጵያ በእርስ በእርስ ጦርነት የምትታመስበት በመሆኑ ሁሉም ባተሌ ነበር። በሽምቅ ተዋጊዎች ጦር በአራቱም አቅጣጫ የሚንጸገረው የደርግ መንግስት በጦርነት በመማገዱና የሚይዝ የሚጨብጠውን በማጣቱ ቤተ እስራኤላውያኑን ወደ እስራኤል ለማንጓዝ «ዘመቻ መሴ» ለተሰኘው የእስራኤል ኦፕሬሽን ተፈጻሚነት አመቺ ወቅት ነበር። በሱዳን በኩል ሰርገው ለገቡትና ለዓመታት ለሰለጠኑት የእስራኤል ሰላዮችም ወርቃማ ጊዜ ነበር።

[Since the country was in a state of turmoil, every citizen lacked concentration. The Darg was ceaselessly fighting against guerrilla fighters in all four directions and thus the time was appropriate for an airlift of the Beta Israel people in what was called ‘Operation Moses’. This was a golden time for the Israeli secret service who entered the country through the Sudan border.

Yismaeke’s second novel, *Ramatohara* (2010), also touches on the Moses and Solomon operations in the dialogues between Miraj and Sipara. Sipara, as explained above, was a Beta Israel girl airlifted to Israel during the Moses operation and became a Mosad agent. Sipara came back to Ethiopia to participate in the business of abducting Shagiz, who represented Kitaw Ejigu, a space scientist and chairman of ENUF, to Israel. Sipara in the mean time accidentally met her former boyfriend, Miraj who was also involved in the same operation. Sipara later decided to live in Ethiopia. She was in love with Miraj when they grew up together in one of the monasteries. As previously mentioned, Miraj left the monastery and was forced to live in the street, because of committing the forbidden act of having a love affair with Sipara. Then he was forcibly taken from the street to serve in the national military service and went to the northern fronts. Later on, he escaped and left for America via Sudan; and he became a medical doctor. In the reaserch centre, Dertogada, he was given a role in the abduction of Shagiz to Ethiopia.

Sipara, in her dialogue with Miraj about her decision to stay in Ethiopia, referred to the story of Colonel Goshu Wolde, who was once the former foreign minister of Ethiopia in the Darg government, and strongly objected the airlifting of the Beta Israel people because he thought that Israel wanted the young Ethiopian Jews for military purpose. Sipara even disclosed that 15,000 elderly men and women, and sick people

were sent back to their birth place at the end of operation Moses. The young Beta Israelis, who were physically fit, had already gone to Israel in big airplanes. This is revealed in the dialogue between Sipara and Miraj (2010: 162 - 163).

Like the Moses operation, operation Solomon is also raised in the dialogues between the characters. The operation was conducted under the guise of reunification of separated family members. It was also conducted with the agreement made between the Darg and the Israeli government (Spector, 2005: 117). The Darg made the agreement with a plan to get military and financial help from the Israeli government, because at that time the Darg's relationships with its former allies, Russia and East Germany, were declining due to the political reform of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the rest of the communist world, i.e. due to *Perestroika* and *Glasnost* (Bahru, 2002a: 264). Thus, the Darg later agreed with Israel as it had a plan to get financial assistance. The agreement was facilitated by two Darg officials, Colonel Tesfaye and Kassa Kebede. Kassa was trained in Israel and spoke Hebrew fluently. He fled to Israel in the last flight, after he completed his task of smuggling the Beta Israel into Israel (Spector, 2005: 174). However, Mengesetu fled to Zimbabwe before he received the money as the EPRDF was so close to Addis Ababa. As Bahru noted (2002a: 267) CIA might have interfered in arranging the flight of Mengesetu to Zimbabwe. This issue of the politics of operation Solomon has been reflected in the dialogues of Miraj and Sipara as follows (*Ramatohara*, 2010: 163 - 164):

በአውሮፓ አቆጣጠር በ1991 ዓ.ም. ዘመቻ ሰሎሞን ተጀመረ። ሽፋኑም «የተለያዩ ቤተሰቦች ማገናኘት» የሚል ነበር፤ በዚህ ዘመቻም ብዙዎች ተግዘዋል።

መንግስቱ ኃ/ማሪያም እ.ኤ.አ. በግንቦት 1991 ዓ.ም. ለመጨረሻ ጊዜ ኢትዮጵያን ለቀው ሲወጡ፤ ...የወቅቱ ጠቅላይ ሚኒስቴር የነበሩት ይዛቅ ሻሚር ኤል ኤል ተብሎ ለሚጠራው የእስራኤል አየር መንገድ አስቸኳይ ትእዛዝ አስተላልፈው ነበር። ይህ ልዩ ትእዛዝ የዘመቻ ሰሎሞንን መጀመር የሚያበስር የፊሽካ ድምጽ ነበር። አማጽያኑ ወደ መዲናይቱ ለመግባት አቆብቀው እያለ ከነጻ አውጭዎች ጋር በተደረገው ምስጢራዊ ድርድር አዲስ አበባ ከመግባት ትንሽ እንዲታገሉ ተደርጓል።

ከአርብ ግንቦት እ.ኤ.አ. 16/1991 ጀምሮ ለተከታታይ 36 ሰዓታት ከ34 በላይ የሆኑ የኤል ኤል ጃንቦ ጄቶችና ሲ-130 ኤስ የተባሉት ክንፋም አውሮፕላኖች እያረፉ ወደ 15000 የሚጠጉ ቤተ እስራኤላውያን

ተጓጉዘዋል።በዚህ ሰዓት የደርግ ባለ ሥልጣናት ከሀገር እንዳይጠፉ ስለተፈለገ ከእነዚህ የእስራኤል አውሮፕላኖች በቀር ከኢትዮጵያ የሚነሳና የሚያርፍ አውሮፕላን አይታይም ነበር።

“ኢትዮጵያ በምድር በሰማይ ተቆልፋ ማንም እንደይንቀሳቀስ በተደረገበት በዚህ ሰዓት መነጋገሪያውን ወደ አፉ አስጠግቶ ይህንን አፕሬሽን ያካሄደው የነበረው ባለስልጣን ...በወቅቱ የደህንነት ሚኒስትር የነበረው ባለስልጣን...ይህ ሰው የዘመቻ ስለሞን ዋና ተዋናይ ነው። በቀዳማይ ኃ/ስላሴ ጊዜ እስራኤል ሀገር ተልኮ ወታደራዊ ሳይንስ ሲያጠና ሞላድ እንደመለመለው ይነገራል።... ሲ. አይ. ኤ. እንደመለመለው ይታማል። መንግስቱ ኃ/ማሪያምንም ወደ ኬንያ ለመወርወር የቀደመው የለም”።

[The Solomon operation started in 1991. It was conducted under the cover of reuniting separated family members. Many people were smuggled in this operation into Israel. In 1991, when Mengesetu Hailemariam fled for good, Yitzhak Shamir, the then prime minister of Israel gave urgent command for ELAL airlines. The command declared the beginning of the Solomon Operation. The Guerrilla fighters were ready to enter Addis Ababa. But, they were made to stay from entering Addis Abeba for a short time.

Beginning on Friday, May 16, 1991, 15,000 Beta Israel people were airlifted to Israel in 36 hours by C-130 airplanes. No airplane except, ELAL was allowed to fly on the sky of Addis Ababa in order to prevent possible escapes of Darg officials from Ethiopia.

At a time when all transportation to and from Addis Ababa was closed, the only person in charge of the operation was the then security head... He was suspected to be a Mossad agent recruited when he was a student in Israel during the period of Haileselassie. It was also rumoured that he was an agent of CIA, and he facilitated Mengesetu's flight to Kenya.]

The representations of the two operations (the Moses and Solomon operations) in the novel are as realistic as those stated in Spector (2005). As to Spector, during operation Solomon, Israel was able to airlift more than 14,000 Beta Israelis (in the novel, the number is 15,000) in less than a day and a half (2005: 1). Operation Moses, however, was not represented in the contemporaneous novels, probably because of self censorship and/or censorship. Solomon Operation, on the other hand, was reflected in the contemporaneous novels after the operation was completed. *Dertogada* criticizes both the Darg government and the insurgents for allowing the Israeli government to smuggle the Beta Israelis out of Ethiopia for reasons of financial and material benefit. The Darg with the exception of some ministers like Goshu Wolde, and the EPRDF did not condemn the operation, perhaps they considered the Beta Israelis as minorities. Nonetheless, there is a belief that the Beta Israel people have lived in

Ethiopia since the time of Queen of Sheba, more than 2000 years ago (*Kibrä Nägäst* (Glory of Kings) as referred by Bahru, 2002a:1). Such a kind of race politics and the quest for roots of an ethnic group or race are one of the dominant agendas of New Historicism and Critical Discourse Analysis (Vallone, 1996: 103; Dijk, 2001: 361 - 362).

6.2.3. Ethnic Politics

The EPRDF had promoted ethnic politics even before the constitution was approved in August 1995. Ethnic political parties were encouraged as far as they accepted the politics of the EPRDF.

Since EPRDF came to power, a number of ethnic based conflicts have been observed in some parts of the country, especially in Oromia region. For example, there were conflicts between the Oromo and the Amhara people in the former provinces of Harerge, Bale and Arsi (Wondwoson, 2008: 6; 2009: 63). Some political organizations such as the Oromo People Democratic Organization (OPDO), Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) and the All Amhara People Organization (AAPO) condemned each other for being the causes or aggravating the problem. The novel, *Yäburqa Zimīta*, deals extensively with this politics of ethnicity. For instance, the conflict that took place in Arsi, and the consequent blames made between the Oromo and the Amhara fronts with regard to instigating the conflict are explained by the narrator (2000: 390 - 391, 392 - 393 respectively):

ከቡርቃ ግጭት በሁዋላ በተለያዩ የአርሲ አካባቢዎች በኦሮሞና በአማራ ገበሬዎች መካከል መጠነ ሰፊ ግጭቶች ይከሰቱ ጀመር። ቃጠሎው ደም መፋሰሱ ወደ ሳጉሬ - ጉና - አርባ ጉጉ - በቆጂ - ጎሮ - አገልጆ - ጃራ - ተዛመተ። የመከላከያ ሰራዊት ግጭቶችን ለማስወገድ ከወዲያ ወዲህ መወርወር ዋነኛ ስራው ሆነ። አርሲ በርግጥም የእሳት እቶን ሆነች።

ኢህአዴግ በሁለቱ ብሄሮች መካከል የቆየ መሻከር ቢኖርም ለግጭቱ በዚህ መልኩ መከሰት የአነግ እጅ አለበት ሲል ገለጸ። መግለጫው አያይዞ አነግ ከግጭቱ ፖለቲካዊ ጥቅም አልሞ የነበረ ቢሆንም ውጤቱ ግን ህዝብን ጎድቷል። አነግ የሰላም መንገድ ያለመፈለግ ዝንባሌው ወደ አደገኛ ደረጃ እየተሻገረ ነው...

መአህድ በበኩሉ ግጭቱን ያስነሳው የኢህአዴግ የጎሳ ፖሊሲና የአነግ ዘረኝነት ነው ሲል መግለጫ አወጣ። በመግለጫውም በአርሲ የሚኖሩ የአማራና የኦሮሞ ገበሬዎች ላለፉት መቶ አመታት እጅና ጉዋንት ሆነው

በፍቅር ኖረዋል። አሁን በተነሳው ጠብም ዋነኛ ተጠቂ አማራው ነው ሲል እሪታውን አሰማ።

አህያድ ደግሞ «የአማራውም ሆነ የኦሮሞው ጉዳት እኩል ነው የሚሰማን ሲል መግለጫ አወጣ፤ ምክንያቱ በሁለቱም ወገን የተጎዱት ጭቆኖች ንጹሃኖች ናቸው። የዚህ እሳት አቀጣጣዮች የአደጋው ሰላባ አልሆኑም። እነሱ ፍንፍኔ ቁጭ ብለው፤ አዳማ ላይ ቂብ ብለው አርባ ጉጉ ላይ እሳት ይለኩላሉ። አውሮፓ ቁጭ ብለው በክልሉ ላይ እሳት ይጭራሉ። ገፈት ቀማሽ የሆኑት ሁለቱ ህዝቦች ናቸው። ስለዚህ በሁለቱም ህዝቦች ላይ የደረሰው ጉዳት እኩል ይሰማናል። በአማራው ላይ ብቻ ጭፍጨፋ ተፈጽሟል ብሎ መአህድ የሚያቀርበውን ግን ፍጹም አንቀበለውም አለ።

አነግ ደግሞ በፊናው ግጭቱን እኔ አልቀሰቀስኩም። ጠመንጃ አላደልኩም። የኦሮሞ ህዝብ ብሶት በራሱ ሃይል ፈንድቷል። ከእንግዲህ ደግሞ መቆሚያ ላይኖረው ይችላል ሲል አስጠነቀቀ።

[Several conflicts were observed in different Arsi districts between the Amhara and the Oromo peasants, soon after the conflict of Burqa. This bloody conflict expanded to Sagure – Arba Gugu – Beqoji – Goro – Ageljo – Jara. The Army was busy trying to stop the conflicts at different places. Surely Arsi became the centre of the bloody ethnic conflict....

The EPRDF declared, ‘though the conflict between the Oromo and the Amhara people was not new, it was the OLF which was responsible for the recent conflict’; EPRDF further said ‘though the OLF calculated political advantage from the conflict, it resulted in damaging the people. The OLF is following a wrong and dangerous direction against peace.

The AAPO in turn announced that ‘the reason for the conflict between the Oromo and the Amhara people was the ethnic policy of the EPRDF. In its declaration, the AAPO explained ‘the Amhara and the Oromo people have lived together peacefully for the last hundred years. It stated that the Amhara people are the major victims of the conflict.

The OPDO on its part declared, ‘we are sorry for the damage inflicted on both the Amhara and Oromo peoples because on both sides the victims are the innocent poor. Those responsible for the conflict did not face the consequence. They instigated the conflict in Arba Gugu while they set in Addis Ababa and Adama. They set fire on the region while they themselves were in Europe. The victims are the two communities of Amhara and Oromo. So, we are sorry for the victims of the two communities. Nevertheless, we don’t accept the AAPO’s statement which said that only the Amharas are the victims.

OLF on its part declared, ‘the organization is not responsible for the conflict. It did not distribute rifles to the people. The anger of the Oromo people exploded by itself. The OLF further warned ‘the anger of the Oromo people might not be stopped easily’.]

The fundamental cause of the conflict between the Amhara and the Oromo people as reflected in the novel is the expansion of Emperor Menilik II to the land of the Oromo people. The Oromo nationalist characters and the narrator of the novel make Menilik II responsible for the deprivation of the Oromo people from the country's resources. These characters and the narrator repeatedly explained that the Oromo people have been deprived from their basic human rights, their land and their traditions, since the expansion of Menilik II to their region. Therefore, most of the conversations and narrations of these characters target on the defamation of Emperor Menilik II.

The novel reflects that the conflict of Burqa occurred during the EPRDF period because of the myth told in connection with the River Burqa and the death of an old man, Aba Dula Wako. According to the myth, the River Burqa had begun to flow underground after Menilik II controlled the land that belonged to the Oromo people. Before that time, River Burqa, like most rivers, used to flow on the surface of the land. When the Emperor controlled the area, the river felt ashamed and started to flow underground. The indication of the myth is that the River Burqa will flow like the good old days on ground when the Oromo people administer themselves and become the owners of their land; a prophecy that will happen when the old man Aba Dula Wako dies. Now, the time has come. The old man died and the Oromo people of the Burqa area are ready to expel and eliminate the surrounding Amhara people who are considered as ነፍቲኡ (‘näfitäña’); a term that refers to people whose grandfathers settled on the land of the Oromo, after expelling the Oromo people from their native land. The narrator and the Oromo characters further blame Menilik II, believing that he was the one who changed their democratic cultures, for instance, the ‘Geda’ system. Thus, the Burqa Oromo people, taking the death of Aba Dula Wako as an opportunity, wait for their mythic leaders, Anoli and Hawini, so that the Oromo people take the revenge against the Amharas who lived around Burqa, for the ‘crime’ or loss which happened 100 years before. The novel used the myth to instigate the Oromo people against the Amhara, “‘näfitäña”’.

The function of literature in the construction of identity of people is described by Bertens (2001: 176) as follows:

just like any other text, literature does not simply reflect relations of power,
but actively participates in the consolidation and/or construction of discourses

and ideologies, just as it functions as an instrument in the construction of identities, not only at the individual level – that of the subject – but also on the level of the group or even that of the national state.

Likewise, the novel, *Yäburqa Zimita*, constructs discourses related to identity and nationality. The major Oromo characters, Hawini and Anoli, promote Oromo tribalism emphasizing the right of the Oromo people to self determination and that the Oromo language must be the language of the people in education and the courts. They also claimed that the people must be the beneficiaries of the land and resources in the region, and that they must administer themselves. This is what Hawini propagates for the assembly of the Oromo elders (2000: 277 - 288).

The Oromo characters in the novel are even seen pushing the Oromo people to revenge the Amharas by telling them the provoking story (the myth of the silence of Burqa) and giving explanations related to Oromo identity. For example, Hawini refers to the *Dictionary of Amharic*, by Kidanewold Kifle and the religious narrative, *Raiye Mariam*, while Anole refers to Aba Bahri the writer of *Zena Galla*, to justify that their identity has been looked down by the Amharas as the authors referred to them using the word, ‘Galla’ (2000: 151, 280, 284). Such explanations could be offending and derogatory not only to the Oromo people but also other Ethiopian readers. It might not be wrong for someone to raise a question on why the author made references to century old books at this time of ethnic political pressure. The author arguably used it for political consumption²³ of provoking hatred on the part of the Oromo people on Amharas. The situation that one observes in the novel could show the power of literature in constructing ideology on the people. In connection to this point, new historicists and system theorists believe that literature has the power to reveal and shape ideologies and politics in the society (Wa Thiong'o, 1981: 6, 73; Bertens, 2001: 166 - 167). In other words, a literary text like this could serve as a “basis for the reconstruction of an ideology” (Belsay, 1980 as referred by Myers, 1988-89).

²³ The character Hawini, however, narrates in the novel that Kidanewold Kifle wrote his point of view about the meaning of Galla as “አለቃ ኪዳኑ ወልድ ባዘጋጁት መዝገበ ቃላት ጋላን ገድሎ ምነው - ገለሌ ማለት ነበር ሲሉ አነረዋል” (literally means kill the Gala people and boast) (2000: 280), Kidanewold Kifle in black and white wrote the meaning of Galla as the name of an Ethnic group that originated from central Africa and who became the enemy of the Amhara people; so that the saying “kill the Galla and boast” originated from this enmity at that moment in the history of the two people. Kidanewold did not write based on his point of view; he rather told the popular saying at that time (however, I think that such kind of writing should not be encouraged). The whole words of the dictionary(1955) is stated as follows: “ጋላ በቁሙ ልዩነት ያለው ባለመለዩ ሕዝብ ጭፍራ፡፡ ስመ ነገድ ጋሎስ ከሚባል ሕዝብ የወጣ፤ ወይም ከማህል አፍሪቃ የመጣ ያማራ ጠላት ደመኛ፡፡ (ተረት) በግና ተኩላ ዐማራና ጋላ፤ ጋላን ገድሎ ምነው ጋሌ በማለት ፈንታ ምነው ገለሌ ማለት ከዚህ ከስሙ የወጣ ነው፡፡”

Anole, one of the major characters, suspects that it is the Tigrean organization (TPLF) which dominates the EPRDF. As to him, the Oromo organization (OPDO) which is a member of the EPRDF is a puppet Oromo organization founded by the TPLF when TPLF planned to expand the war outside the Tigray region, following its surprising victory over the huge army of the Darg. Therefore, Anole thought that to get into the Oromia region, TPLF must have a puppet Oromo organization, OPDO; otherwise, the Oromo people would not welcome the TPLF and EPRDF. Hence, for Anole, the OPDO is not a free and independent Oromo organization (2000: 301), and the EPRDF is a new ‘‘näfit’ä★a’’ organization, thus, one of the reasons for his agitation of the Oromo people to rebel and subvert against EPRDF. In connection to subversion, Brannigan (2001: 174) states, ‘‘Literature, like other written sources, raises the possibility of subversion against the state’’. Regarding the need for an independent Oromo organization, Anole in his dialogue with Kumsa, one of the real life leaders of OPDO, says (2000: 301):

ከማንም ያልተጠጋጋ ከበላዩ የኦሮሞ ሰማይ ብቻ ያለው የኦሮሞ ድርጅት ያስፈልገናል። የሚቆጣ አለቃ ይዘህ እጅህን ይዞ ፖለቲካ ያስተማረህን ከተጣልክበት አንስቶ በህልምህ እንኩዋ የማታስበውን ስልጣን ያገናጸፈህን የሌላ ብሄር ጌታ ይዘህ እንዴት ነው ስለዴሞክራሲ የምታወራልን?

[We need an Oromo organization that has no one on top of the political ladder to control it, except the Oromo people. How do you talk about democracy when your master political organization shapes you in its own way and places itself on top of the ladder of the political structure?]

The OPDO in turn accuses the other Oromo organization, OLF, as anarchist and secessionist which is also responsible for all the conflicts that took place in the region. Such literary reflections seem to have stemmed from the real political environment. For instance, the OPDO made the OLF responsible for the massacre in Bedeno and Arba Gugu (Wondwoson, 2008: 6 & 2009: 63).

According to Kumsa, one character in the novel, the OPDO and OLF do have differences regarding the idea of secession. OPDO believes that if the Oromo people are made autonomous, and have the right for self determination, they can live with other Ethiopian nationalities in love and respect. As to the OPDO, secession is not a solution to the problem of the Oromo people.

Anole's position on the issue of secession does not seem to differ from that of Kumsa and OPDO. But, Anole believes that as the Oromo people are the largest ethnic group living in the largest part of Ethiopia, they have to secure the leadership of the country. The issue of secession, in relation to Kumsa's and Anole's position, are reflected through the narrator's report in the following few paragraphs (2000: 304, 324):

በጉልበት መጠቀም መፍትሄ አለመሆኑን ነው። ከአነግ ጋር ያለን ልዩነትም ይኮው ነው። የኦሮሞ ህዝብ አካባቢውን ማስተዳደር ይጀምራል። የመብቱና የኢኮኖሚው ተጠቃሚ ይሆናል። ባህልና ቋንቋውን ማሳደግ ይጀምራል። ይህ ከሆነ በኛ እምነት ከሌሎች ኢትዮጵያውያን ጋር በጋራ መኖር የማንችልበት ሁኔታ የለም።

የመገንጠል ጥያቄም የኦሮሞ ህዝብ ጥያቄ ከሆነ በህዝብ ውሳኔ ይስተናገድ ባይ ነን። የአነግ መሪዎች ግን ትላንት ነፍጠኛው ያደርግ እንደነበረው በህዝብ ደም መክበር ነው የሚሹት። በዚህ ከፍተኛ ልዩነት አለን። አንተም ሳታውቀው የአነግ አመለካከት ተሸካሚ የሆነክ ይመስለኛል።

አኖሌ የመገንጠል ጥያቄ መፍትሄ ነው ብሎ አያምንም። የመገንጠል ጥያቄ በመብት ደረጃ ከተቀመጠ በቂ ነው ይላል። ኦሮሚያ ከሌላው የኢትዮጵያ ህዝብ ተገንጥሎ የትም ሊሄድ አይችልም የሚል እምነት አለው። ሆኖም የኦሮሞ ህዝብና ምድር ከመላው ኢትዮጵያ ከግማሽ በላይ በመሆኑ ኦሮሞዎች ኢትዮጵያን በበላይነት መምራት ማረጋገጥ ይገባቸዋል ባይ ነው።

[Power cannot bring a solution. The difference between us and the OLF is this. If the Oromo people begin to administer their region, they will be the beneficiaries of their economy. They can develop their language and culture. If this happens we believe that there is no reason we cannot live together with other ethnic groups.

If secession is the question of the Oromo people, we believe that the people have to decide. But, the OLF leaders want to be rich at the expense of the blood of the people, like what the 'näfit'äñas' did in the past. We have big differences on this issue. You, (Anole), are also unconsciously promoting the politics of the OLF.

Anole does not believe that secession is a solution to the problem; in fact, he believes that stating secession as a right could be enough. He asserts that the Oromo people can go nowhere by isolating themselves from other Ethiopians. However, since the Oromo people and the land represent more than half of the country, the Oromos must take the upper hand in administrating the country.]

On one side, Anole claims for the equality of the Oromo people and wishes respect for each ethnic group in Ethiopia; on the other, he wants the supremacy of the

Oromo people over the other ethnic groups, because of their population and the area of the region. This position entertains contradictory ideas that are held by the character, Anole.

Hawini does not like the political leaders of the OPDO, because she believes that some of them, including the character, the chairman, Solomon Disasa, have been corrupted since the EPRDF entered Addis Ababa. Hawini believes that the Oromo people must be autonomous, in administering themselves, and live peacefully with other ethnic groups in Ethiopia. The Oromo people have to learn and be judged by their own language, and this can be achieved by working together with the EPRDF (2000: 40). As described above, Anole, unlike Hawini, is suspicious of the EPRDF and its leadership, even after he was rescued by Hayelom and got his cooperation to secretly escape to Eritrea (2000: 442). This can be understood from the dialogue that Anole makes with the author/editorial narrator at Asmara in the epilogue of the novel (2000: 456):

የወያኔ የፖለቲካ ሞተሮች እንደ ሃየሎም አያስቡም፤ በመቆየት የተገነዘቡት ሀቅ ይህንን ነው። ይህ ደብዳቤ የሃየሎምን ልብ እንጂ ህወሀትን አይወክልም። ... (የወያኔን) የፖለቲካ ስውር ጉዞ ከሃየሎም ልብ ጋር እየቀላቀለች (ሃዊኒ) ነው መምታታት ውስጥ የገባችው። እኔ እንደማምነው በሃየሎም ይመሩ የነበሩት የአኒያ ቅን ጀግኖች ዘመን አልፎአል። የእነርሱ ህልምና እምነት በዛሬው የፖለቲካ መድረክ ውስጥ የለም (ማብራሪያው የተመራማሪው ነው)።

የአሮሞ ህዝብ ገና ነጻነቱን ባለማግኘቱ በስውር ቅኝ አገዛዝ ስር በመውደቁ በቀጣይ በራሱ መንገድ መታገሉን መቀጠል አለበት። የጆርጅ ኦርዌልን በገሀዱ አለም ለማየት መብቃቱ በእጅጉ ይደንቀኛል። ኦርዌል ነቢይ ነበር። አንድ ሌላ ሀቅ ደሞ ልንገራችሁ፤ ወደፊት የአሮሞ ህዝብ መራራ መስዋዕትነት ከፍሎ ነጻነቱን በጁ ማስገባቱ አይቀርም። በዚያን ጊዜ ግን የአሮሞ ህዝብ ስሜት አደገኛ ነው የሚሆነው። ከባድ የበቀል ነበልባል ሊለኩስም ይችላል። ኢትዮጵያውያን ይህ እንዳይፈጸም የሚሹ ከሆነ ከወዲሁ ሊያስቡበት ይገባል። ያ ቀን ከመምጣቱ በፊት በሰላማዊ መንገድ ሙሉ መብቶቻችን ይከበራልን ዘንድ እንሻለን።

[The political cadres of the TPLF do not think like Hayelom. This is a fact that I have realized through time. This letter represents the good heart of Hayelom, not that of TPLF... Hawini mixed TPLF's secretive political voyage and Hayelom's good heart and entered a state of confusion. I believe that the good old days of the good hearted heroes like Hayelom are gone. The dreams and beliefs of those people do not exist in today's political stage.

The Oromo people should continue their struggle in their own ways as they are indirectly colonized and deprived of their democratic rights. It surprises me that I have seen the story of George Orwell in real life. Orwell was really a prophet. Let me tell you another fact. It is inevitable that the Oromo people secure freedom after a bitter struggle. At that time, the feelings of the Oromo people might be dangerous. A big fire of revenge may begin to burn. Ethiopians should think about it if they don't want this to happen. Therefore, before that day comes, Ethiopians should let us (Oromo people) enjoy our democratic rights.]

Anole makes an analogy between EPRDF's government and George Orwell's *Animal Farm* (1945): "All Animals are equal but some animals are more equal than others". This analogy is given to explain that TPLF is preaching equality among the Ethiopian people, while in reality it is ruling the Oromo People.

There are other incidents related to ethnic politics in *Yäburqa Zimäta*. For instance, ethnic problem is given as a reason for Hawini's escape from Gondar to Sudan (2000, p.124). In addition, Anole's and Yodit's intimate friendship was broken because of Anole's sentiment to Oromo tribalism. He decided not to be engaged to her, because he thought Yodit's father was a narrow Amhara tribalsit (2000: 150 - 151). In another context, Roza, the Eritrean nationalist character, is heard saying that Eritrean girls do not marry other ethnic people so as to save the race from extinction (2000: 203).

The author or the editorial narrator of *Yäburqa Zimäta* reflects contradictory points. On the one hand, he seems to be sensitive to equality of ethnic groups, but on the other, one sees his characters using derogatory remarks when describing some ethnic groups, historical figures, and writers (2000: 52, 59, 152, 280 - 285). For instance, Anole describes the Amhara people as follows (2000: 52):

ለተረትማ ማን ብሏቸው? ኑሮአቸው ተረት ነው። አስተሳሰባቸውም ተረት ነው። እንደባልቴት ተረት ከማውራት የተሻለ ምን ያውቃሉ? ደደቦች! እነሱን ብሎ ደሞ ስልጡን? ለዚህች ሀገር ምን ቁም ነገር የፈየዱ መሰላቸው? ሶስት ሺህ እያሉ የሚመኩበትን ዘመን ሙሉ ጠጅ በመጣልና በመጠጣት ነው ጊዜያቸውን የፈጁት።

[Who would excell them in telling stories? Their life is telling tales. Their views are also like tales. What do they know better than telling tales like old mome? Idiots. And they are said to be civilized? What useful contribution have they made to this country? The three thousand years they boast about were spent on brewing tej (local alcoholic drink made of honey) and drinking.]

In fact, Anole insulted the Amhara people because he was offended by those who insulted Aba Boru, an elderly Oromo character, using another derogatory phrase, *jil galla* (idiot galla).

According to Hunde (2012, n. p.), the author of *Yäburqa Zimīta* claims that the novel is the first Amharic fiction that portrays Oromo as major characters. Hunde, further reports that “he was thinking about Lencho Lata while he was framing Anole Waqo as a main character...Lencho an outspoken veteran Oromo politician at the centre of the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF)”.

Why does the author, Tesfaye, claim this and dare use derogatory words, phrases and sentences in describing the ethnic groups and narrating provoking stories, like the ones discussed in the previous paragraphs? He could have had a sentimental attachment to Oromo tribalism, because he grew up in Bisheftu, located in Oromia region. Besides, as a politician, the writer could have some kind of political motives²⁴, especially as it can be understood from the description of the dawn (It was an unpleasant dawn! A hopeless dawn!) (see the full extract in p. 211) given in the epilogue i.e. the last page and last paragraph of the novel (2000: 461) and the circulation of the xerox copy of the novel in black market, and the readings of his three books online (*Yägazetāñaw Masīawäša*, *Yädärasiw Masīawäša*, *Ysidätāñaw Masīawäša*) which expose and criticize the political system and the officials of the EPRDF, after leaving the country. In connection with the production and circulation of novels, system theorists explain that the production, circulation and consumption of the novel, whether it is done freely or not, is important in revealing the relationship of the politics and the history (Johnson, 1993:9; see also chapter 2.2.4.2.).

In *Yäburqa Zimīta* some of the politics like conflicts between the Amhara and the Oromo people in Arsi, Bale and Harerge provinces are all reflected overtly and explicitly. Some of the events and sentiments of the characters are reflected implicitly and symbolically. For instance, the sycamore (Oda) tree on which the lamb is hung up, and the light that the lamp gives to the surrounding area of the Burqa plateau

²⁴ Some people suspect him as an agent of Eritrea; Even an article titled “Gize Mäsīawātu; Täsīfayä Gäbiräab manäw? (Time is mirror! Who is Tesfaye Gebreab” by Woldmichael Meshesha discloses this with some evidences of the hand written notes of Tesfaye Gebreab (The PDF article is available in Ethiomedia.com).

symbolically reveal Hawini's and the Oromo people's hopes, as can be understood from the description (2000: 438):

በጨለማው ውስጥ ዋርካዋ ታየቻቸው፤ የኦሮሚያ ዋርካ፤ ዋርካዋ በጸጥታ ቆማለች። ሆርዶፋና ሃዊኒ ዋርካዋ ስር ደረሱ፤ ፋናሳቸውን በቅርንጫፉ ላይ ሲያንጠለጥሉት አካባቢው ወገግ አለ

[They saw the Oda tree in the dark. It is the Oda tree of Oromiya. The Oda tree stands in silence. Hordofa and Hawini arrived under the Oda tree. When they hung the lamp on the branch of the tree, the surrounding area became bright.]

The “Oda” (sycamore) is a symbol of the Oromo people, and the plateau represents the region, or the land.

It is also likely that the mythic river, Burqa, represents the line of generations of the Oromo people (for it is common in Ethiopia to represent generations like the flow of a jirät (river)). The river will once again flow normally on its course, over-ground, when the Oromo people use their right to self determination. The representation of the Oromo people with the River Burqa is reflected in Anole's speech (2000: 83):

ቡርቃ ማለት እናንተ ናችሁ! ዝም ያላችሁትም ወንዙ ሳይሆን እናንተ ናችሁ! የኦሮሞን ምድር የሚያጥለቀልቀው የቡርቃ ወንዝ ትንቢት ለናንተ የተነገረ ምሳሌ ነው

[You (Oromos) are the Burqa River. It is not the River Burqa that is quiet; you are the ones who are quiet. The prophecy told about the Burqa River represents you.]

The plateau of Burqa is the place where Aba Dulla had been assassinated by the people of Menilik II. The association of the silence of Burqa to the silence of the Oromo people, and the beginning of the conflict a century after the Burqa myth in the novel, strengthens the interpretation of the symbolic representation of generations of the Oromo people by River Burqa. Hawini, in one instance, is also heard saying (2000: 458):

የኦሮሞ ህዝብ እንደ ደራሽ ወንዝ ከየጎጂው ወጥቶ አገር ምድሩን በቁጣ ያናውጥ ዘንድ እመኛለሁ

[I wish the Oromo people rush out in anger like a sudden flood.]

The anger of the Oromo people is symbolized by the sudden rush of a river in flood. The closing description of the novel in the epilogue is also a symbolic representation of the feeling of the author/editorial narrator (2000: 461):

ይህንኑ እያዜምኩ አዲ-ሳባ ገባሁ። ማለዳ ነበር። በመንጋት ላይ ያለ ሰንበት ማለዳ። የምስራቅ ሰማይ ወለል ብሎ ታየኝ። አያለሁ። ይታየኛል። የፀሀይቱ መውጫ ይታየኛል። አስፈሪና ከባድ የተፈጥሮ የንጋት ቀለም ሰማይን አጅጎርጉሮታል። ጨፍጋጋ ማለዳ። ተስፋ ቢስ ንጋት። አዎን! ሰማይ የአህያ ሆድ መስሎአል። የወደል አህያ ሆድ።

[I arrived in Addis Ababa when dawn broke.... It was very early on Sunday morning; I clearly saw the eastern sky; I see it; I imagine it. I can see the place from where the sun rises. The frightening and dangerous natural colour of the dawn has covered the sky. It was an unpleasant dawn! A hopeless dawn! Yes the sky looks like “the colour of the skin of a big donkey’s abdomen”²⁵]

Even if the novelist is a member of the EPRDF and an official of the press, the editorial narrator (which most probably represents the author) is not confident in what the EPRDF is doing and the country looks like in the future. Also, he is not confident in the EPRDF in bringing equality and democracy in the country in general and the Oromo people in particular. Because of this, he has a plan to start an armed struggle. It is this situation and feelings of the editorial narrator revealed by the symbolic description of the dawn.

Ethnicity and religion are not given significant space in Yismaeke’s novels, except for some explanations in *Ramatohara* which touches the subject on different pages; for instance, the explanations in the diary of Woldehiwot about the wall writings of sex, religion and race (2010: 143). There is also a part in the dialogue between Miraj and Sipara where Miraj indicates the problems of ethnicity (2009: 160):

በዚህ ወቅት ተበደልኩ የማይል ብሄር እንደሌለ ነው የምነግርሽ። ምን ተበደልክ ስትይው ግን አጥጋቢ መልስ የለውም። ጭሰኛ ነበርኩ ይልሻል። ጭሰኝነት የኢትዮጵያ ታሪክ ብቻ አይደለም። ወዛደርነት የኛ ብቻ አልነበረም። በእርግጥ አሁን ማንም ጭሰኛ አይባልም። ነገር ግን አጫጫሽ ተደርጓል።

²⁵ “The color of the skin of a big donkey’s abdomen” represents a gray colour which in turn represents a gray sky.

እርጥብ የታሪክ እንጨት ማግዶ እና እያለ ሲጨናበስ ሌላ ነገር በጀርባ
ይጫጫሳል።

[At this particular time, I tell you that there is no any ethnic group that does not say ‘we are mistreated’; and if you ask them why they think so, they have no answer to give you. They say that they were tenants; but, tenancy was not only a history of Ethiopia. Proletarianism was not also the only experience of Ethiopia. There is no tenant today. However, the ethnic groups are made to be fire makers. They are trying to make fire from (wet woods of) history, while other things are smoked secretly in the underground.]

As reflected in Miraj’s speech, the ethnic groups complain about inequality or domination with no strong justification; they are simply pushed by ethnic political parties or fronts. This can be realized from what Miraj says in the last two sentences in the quotation above. One could ask the following questions: who is responsible for instigating the ethnic groups to make the fire from (the wet woods of) history? What does the phrase, “እርጥብ የታሪክ እንጨት ማግዶ እና እያለ ሲጨናበስ” (“irtib yatarik inč’at magido iif iyalä sič’nabäs”) [smoking ‘the wet woods of history’] symbolize? Who smokes another thing when the ethnic groups are already smoking the wet wood of history? What is the other thing that the instigator groups smoke in the underground? Miraj seems to be implying that these groups are writing new history that could help them for their political ends (for instance, like the intent to assert that Ethiopian history is only 100 years old, taking into consideration its modern form since the time of Emperor Menilik II, instead of the 3000 years old history of Ethiopia (Teshale, 1995: xii)). Hence, these phrases show the suspicion that the character, Miraj, has towards the ruling party, EPRDF. The deconstruction of the language also shows the power of words in revealing different ideologies and interpretations regarding ethnic politics. With regard to the power that words have in revealing ideology, Fairclough (1992: 87), as cited by Jørgensen, and Phillips, (2002: 75), explains that discourses can be more or less ideological that contribute to the maintenance and transformation of power relations.

In *Ramatohara*, the characters (concerning their ethnic and religious background) belong to different ethnic groups such as Tigre, Amhara, and Oromo, and are Muslims, Christians or Jews. For instance, Shagiz is from Bonga, like the real life character, engineer Qitaw. Colonel Aligaz is from Adwa, Tigray though he grew up in Bale, Oromia. Mariye and his father Wako are from Illibabur, Oromia. Melat and

Siraj Ahmed Siraj are Muslims, while Aba Finhas and his daughter Sipara are Jews. These issues of religion and ethnicity are found more in *Ramatohara* than in *Dertogada*. In *Dertogada*, some of the characters are Jews while the others are Christians. The reason might be that the settings of the story are some Orthodox monasteries found in the islands of Lake Tana, and some of the organizers of the research centres, *Dertogada* and *Ramatohara*, are monks. Irrespective of their differences in religion and ethnicity, the characters in the novels work for one objective - developing of a research and science centre. If there is any difference among them, that difference is a matter of outlook or economic benefit and wealth, rather than ethnicity and race. For instance, Diwola and Feqo are Ethiopians who work against the Ramatohara group, simply to get wealth.

Dertogada also slightly deals with ethnicity in the dialogues of some monks. For instance, in connection to the Ethio - Eritrea war, one of the monks tells another monk his suspicion of the third monk, Aba Gebrezgi, as a narrow Eritrean tribalist.

“አባ ገብረ እግዚዕ ... ያኔ የኢትዮጵያና የኤርትራ ጦርነት ጊዜ የኢትዮጵያ ቦንብ ጣይ አውሮፕላኖች ጣና ሐይቅን በክንፋቸው እየሰነጠቁ ወደ ሰሜን ሲወነጨፉ ከዳጋ አናት ላይ ካለው ዋርካ ወጥተው «ገደሏቸው! ፈጁቸው! ሲሉ የነበር ... ኤርትራዊነታቸው አለቀቃቸውም እንዴ? ምነው እንግዲያ አሁን ዝም አሉ ... የኢትዮጵያ ጉዳይ አያገባቸውም?”

[Aba Gebrezgi ...used to climb on a big tree and yelled, ‘they killed them, they finished them’, when the Ethiopian jets were flying over the skies of Lake Tana towards the north, during the Ethio - Eritrea war? Hasn’t he erased his sentiment of narrow Eritrean tribalism? Why is he silent today? ... Is he not concerned with the problem of Ethiopia?”]

But, the other monk rejects that Aba Gebrezgi is not a narrow Eritrean tribalist as read below (2009: 177):

“፩ ረ ዝም በል! እርሳቸው በኤርትራዊነት አያምኑም። የእርስ በእርስ ጦርነት አሳስቧቸው ይሆናል እንጂ። ይቅው ኢትዮጵያን ሙጥኝ ብለው... ኢትዮጵያ ናት ሀገራ እያሉ አይደል እንዴ እዚህ የቀሩት! እነ ዘርዓይ ድረስ የሞቱላት ሀገር ኢትዮጵያ ናት ኤርትራ አይደለችም! እነ ራስ አሉላ ... አባነጋ የምጽዋው የእሳት በር ... የኢትዮጵያው አጥር ... ሲጠብቃት የኖረችው ሀገር ኢትዮጵያ አይደለችም ወይ?”

[“Please shut up! He is not a narrow Eritrean tribalist. He might have been worried by the civil war. That might be the reason why he stayed here in Ethiopia for years! It is for the sake of Ethiopia that Zeraï Deres was sacrificed, not for Eritrea! Alula Aba Nega, ‘the fire gate of Massawa’, ‘the

fence of Ethiopia'. ... Was it not for the sake of Ethiopia that Alula had guard it?"']

The conversation between the two monks shows the differences among people with regard to ethnic politics that is promoted in the country, and how their understanding can affect the life and experience of people.

6.2.4. The 2005 Election, Ethnic Political Parties and Ethiopian Nationalism

Though there have been few national elections in the country, the election of 2005 was different in that there was a stiff competition among different political parties, for the first time in the history of Ethiopia. The national political parties were freely promoting their political programs that advocated the agenda of unity, while the ethnic based parties were giving more priority to ethnic issues. Some opposition parties formed coalition and got media coverage to introduce their programs to the people. Political dialogues among the different organizations were broadcast live on mass media. The people of Ethiopia were very much pleased with the situation, and for the first time in the political history of the country, millions of people voted for their favourite parties and leaders at different levels. However, the situation was changed overnight when both the EPRDF government and the opposition parties claimed victory. The opposition parties accused the ruling party of rigging ballot cards. Then, demonstrations took place in some big towns of the country. There was unrest throughout the country for a number of days, and several people were arrested and killed (The Carter Centre, 2005).

Some issues related to the politics of the 2005 election are touched in the novels, *Detrogada* and *Ramatohara*. In *Dertogada*, the 2005 election, the ethnic political parties and Ethiopian nationalism are discussed among the monks at the Daga Istifanos monastery. Although monks in Ethiopia are supposed to abstain from secular matters, some of the monks in Daga Istifanos are seen discussing the politics of the election of 2005. They are shown to be attentive to the news and rumours about the election. Some of the monks have even bought their own radios for this special occasion. They listen to different Amharic and English programs of radio stations, like *Voice of America* (VOA) and *Deutsche Welle* (DW) as they do not rely on the local radio, and raise different points related to the election and the political parties. Accordingly, the political instability that was apparent immediately after the Election

Day and the people who were victimized are revealed in the novel through the monks as (2009: 176):

ካስራ ዘጠኝ ዘጠና ሰባቱ የኢትዮጵያ ምርጫ በሁዋላ በተፈጠረው
አለመግባባት ይህን ያህል ሰዎች ሞቱ፤ ይህን ያህል ሰዎች ቆሰሉ...

[This number of people have died and this number have been injured because of the clashes between the government forces and supporters of the opposition parties soon after the time of the election, 2005.]

The monks further blame the ethnic political parties and comment that the most important thing for the country is the ability of the elected people rather than their ethnic background (2009: 177 - 178):

ዘርናና ጎሳን ተመርኩዘው የሚመሰረቱ የፖለቲካ ፓርቲዎችን መምታት ነው...። በቃ። የእገሌ ዘር ፖርቲ፤ የእገሌ ዘር ፓርቲ እያሉ ህዝቡን የከፋፈሉት እነሱ ናቸው። ኢትዮጵያ ውስጥ እኮ ስድስት ሰዎች ብቻ ካሉት ብሄረሰብ መሀል ኢትዮጵያን ለመምራት የሚችል አእምሮ ያለው ሰው ቢነሳና ቢመራት ምንድን ነው ችግሩ? ምንም። እኔ እቀበለዋለሁ። ኢትዮጵያን ለመምራት ዘር ሳይሆን ጭንቅላት መመረጥ አለበት!

ልክ ብለዋል አባ አሉ አንዱ መነኩሴ ተቀብለው «አዎ ኢትዮጵያን ለመምራት ዘር ሳይሆን ጭንቅላት መመረጥ አለበት»።

[“Political parties that are founded on ethnic grounds must be eliminated...! It is the ethnic political parties which have divided the people. What is the problem, if someone intelligent enough leads the country even if he comes from an ethnic group that has a total of 6 people? Nothing! I accept it. It is the ability not the ethnic background which should matter in electing people for their leadership”.

“You are right Aba” said the other monk, “Yes, Aba! Ability, not ethnicity, must be the criteria to choose such a person...”]

Dertogada seems to criticize the ethnic parties as being responsible to the consequences of the 2005 election.

In addition to criticizing the election of 2005, the novel, *Dertogada*, promotes Ethiopian nationalism and unity that have to come through development. According to Aba Jenberu, one of the founders of the organization of Dertogada and Ramatohara, one of the objectives of the organizations is to bring development all over the country through science and research. One of the means to facilitate the development and the connection of people is the construction of cross country

railroads. This helps in bringing unity among the people of Ethiopia, without any need for political interference. But, Aba Jenberu explains that Ethiopian leaders do not want such developments, because they think that it would make it easier for rebels who struggle to overthrow the government. This is reflected in the following words of the character, Aba Jenberu (2009: 196 - 197):

የኢትዮጵያ መሪዎች ራሳቸውን ወንበሩ ላይ ለማቆየት ... ለፖለቲካ ... ለስብሰባ ... ለፕሮጋንዳ መንዣ ... ለካድሬ ኮፊያ እንኳ የሚያወጡት ገንዘብ በሀገሪቷ ሙሉ የባቡር ሃዲዶችን ለመዘርጋት ቢያውሉት እስከ አሁን ሀገሪቷ በድህነት አትማቅቅም ነበር። ይህን ማድረግ ግን አይፈልጉም፤ ... መንገዶች ከበዙም መንግስትን ለመገልበጥ እሚሞክር ማንኛውም ሀይል በቀላሉ ሊሳካለት ስለሚችል። መሪዎቻችን እነማንም ይሁኑ እነማን እኛ በግላችን በየትኛውም ጊዜ በየትኛውም ፈተና ውስጥ ሆነን ሀገራችንን መገንባት አለብን። እስከመቼ ጥሩ መሪ እንጠብቃለን። ... የባቡር ሃዲዱም የሃገራችን አንድነትና ህልውና ደም መዘዋወሪያ የደም ስር ይሆናል። እስኪበከተሞች ውስጥ የምድር ውስጥ የኤሌትሪክ ባቡሮች ሲወነጨፉ ... በምድር ላይ ደግሞ አገር አቋራጭ ተወንጫፊ ባቡሮች በባቡር ሃዲዶች ላይ በተባረሩና በተበሉ ተራሮች ውስጥ እያቆራረጡ ሽው እልም ሲሉ የሚመጣውን ብልጽግና አስብ። ይታይህ የሚኖረው አንድነት! ይታይህ ያኔ የሚኖረው መፈቃቀር ... ይታይህ ያኔ የሚፈጠረው መቀራረብ ... ይታይህ የተሰባበረው የኢትዮጵያ የአንድነት መንፈስ ሲጠገን ... ይሄ ነው እውናዊ አንድነት።

አለበለዚያ ዝም ብሎ ኢትዮጵያ ኢትዮጵያ ማለት የወሸት ይመስላል።
...ኢትዮጵያዊነት ወደ አፍሪካዊነት እየተለወጠ ኢትዮጵያ ላይ የተለከለው ችቦ ከጽንፍ እስከ አጽናፍ እየበራ ይመጣል። አፍሪካም ታብባለች።

[If Ethiopian leaders had used the money that they spend for propaganda purposes and for buying caps for their cadres, for the construction of railways, the country would not have stayed at a low level of poverty until now. However, they don't want to do this because if cross regional railways are built, it will be easy for any armed opponent political group to overthrow any government in power.

Whoever our leaders are, we must build our country, even if we are in any difficult situation. How long can we wait for good leaders? ... The railway will be the cell and blood vessel of our unity and existence. Imagine our cities when electric trains are driven fast in the underground railway...Imagine the development that comes with trans-regional trains driven fast on the ground and through tunnels of mountains. Imagine the unity that will grow out of this development. Imagine the love that we will have. Imagine the close relationship that will be formed among the people... and how the broken bones of unity of Ethiopia will be repaired... This will be the real unity.

Otherwise, crying for “Ethiopia!” with zero effort is meaningless. It seems false! ... Ethiopian nationalism may be changed into African regionalism; and the torch that will be kindled in Ethiopia may give light to the whole of Africa. Africa could blossom.]

Unlike *Yäburqa Zimäta*, which portrays Menelik negatively as invader and colonizer, *Dertogada* considers the Emperors Menilik II and Tewodros as heroes, symbols of unity and development. This is reflected in different contexts of the novel. For instance, the mounting of the photographs of the two Emperors on the walls of the meeting hall of the Dertogada as can be understood from the description made by the narrator is a sign of respect of the two kings (2009: 183):

ባዳራሹ ግድግዳ ዙሪያ ... ያጼ ቴዎድሮስና ያጼ ሚኒሊክ ትላልቅ ስዕሎች ግድግዳው ላይ ተሰቅለዋል

[The photographs of Emperors Tewodros and Menilik are *hanged* on the walls of the auditorium.]

In a different context, when a one-legged former war-victim soldier begs for money in the name of Mengestu, Tewodros and Menilik, someone promises to give him one Birr, provided he begs in the name of the Prime Minister. The beggar’s reply to that was “በስሙ የምለምንበት ሰው መች አጣሁ” [I have another person on whose name I beg] (2009: 125) and showed him the photograph of Tewodros.

Dertogada and Ramatohara, the name of which the novels take, are national organizations that are immune to race, religion, and ethnicity. The common objective of these organizations is to lay the foundation of Ethiopian nationalism and civilization through developing the whole country. They are programs launched for the resurrection of Ethiopia, and every Ethiopian scientist is welcome to join Dertogada and Ramatohara, irrespective of his/her ethnicity, race and religion. This conviction is further elaborated by the character, Colonel Fisseha, who says the following (2009: 250):

ይህች ሀገር ... እናት ሀገር ኢትዮጵያ የምንላት ለጥቂቶች አንጉዋች ለብዙዎቻችን ደግሞ የእንጀራ እናት ሆናለች። ኢትዮጵያን ለኢትዮጵያውያን መመለስ የሚቻለው በዴሞክራሲ ነው። ዴሞክራሲ ለጥቂቶች ብቻ የሚያደገድግ ድርጅት አይደለም። ለየትኛውም ሃይማኖት ዘር ጎሳ የፖለቲካ ድርጅት ጥበቃ ለማድረግ የተቋቋመ ድርጅት አይደለም። ማንኛውንም ኢትዮጵያዊ በአመለካከቱ ምክንያት በጠላትነት አይፈርድም። የኢትዮጵያን

ትግር ሳይንስ እንጂ ፕሮፓጋንዳ አይፈታውም። ዴርጉዳ ኢትዮጵያን በሳይንስ ወደ ቀደመ ክብሯ ይመልሳታል።

[This country... mother country, Ethiopia, has been good for the few but a step mother (cruel) for many of us. It is possible to make Ethiopia for all Ethiopians through Dertogada. Dertogada is an organization that works neither for few individuals, nor for the benefit of any specific religion, race, ethnic group or political organization. No Ethiopian national is categorized as an enemy because of his/her outlook. The problems of Ethiopia can be solved by science, not by propaganda. Dertogada will lead Ethiopia to its former prestige and civilization (emphasis mine).]

Eventhough the Colonel states the organizations' immunity to race, ethnicity and religion, Dertogada's emblem is a special cross designed in the shape of the Amharic letter, “ቶ” (2009: 251):

“የኢትዮጵያ ዳግም ትንሳኤና ህዳሴ ምልክትም በ “ቶ” ቅርጽ የተሰራው ይህ ልዩ መስቀል ነው”

[The symbol for the Renaissance of Ethiopia is this special cross made in the design of the Amharic letter “ቶ”.]

Why does the emblem of the organization that claims to be non-religious become a cross, while the characters are presented as followers of the Orthodox, Jewish and Muslim religions or as atheists? One of the reasons might be that the organizations have been founded in the monasteries and run by some monks. In any case, the emblem seems to be contradictory to the objective of the organizations, Dertogada and Ramatohara.

The issue of Ethiopian nationalism is one of the most controversial agenda of the period. The EPRDF promotes ethnic federalism. According to EPRDF, it is through the love and respect of the different ethnic groups that Ethiopian nationalism can be realized. First, the right to self determination of the different ethnic groups is given much importance. Many people, especially those who promote Ethiopian nationalism are afraid of this ethnic policy of the EPRDF, because some of the ethnic groups have already founded their own political organizations, have decided to use their own languages in education and court, and in some cases have even tried to expel people who do not belong to their ethnic groups. Many people consider this situation as a treat to Ethiopian unity. This is one of the reasons why some national parties were

founded in the EPRDF period. They intended to protect Ethiopian nationalism and unity. In this respect, the character in *Yäburqa Zimäta*, Hawini, says (2000: 294):

በተለይም በብሄር መደራጀት የፈጠረው ስጋትና ውዥንብር ማንኛውም ዜጋ ጆሮውን አንቅቶ የሚከሰተውን እንዲያዳምጥ አድርጎታል። ከዚህ ቀደም እምብዛም በግልጽ ያልተሰሙ ያልተለመዱ ስሜቶች በአደባባይ ጸሀይ ሞቁ። የአማራነት፣ የኦሮሞነት ... የትግራዊዎችነት ... የወላይታነት ... ስሜቶች እንደሰደድ እሳት ይያያዙ ጀመር።

[The organization of the people based on ethnicity made everyone attentive to what may happen. Different sentiments which were not openly seen or heard in the past came to the surface. The feelings of being Amhara, Oromo, Wolayta and other tribes spread like wildfire.]

The character, Kumsa, who belonged to the ethnic party, OPDO, reveals in his conversation with Anole that if the right of the Oromo people to self administration is respected, they will become the beneficiaries from the economy and they will be able to develop their language and culture. In that case, there could be no reason for the secession of the Oromo people from other ethnic groups (2000: 302, see also 6.2.3). Hawini also reflects the same sentiment (2000: 460):

የአሮሚያ ልጆች በአንድ ዋርካ ዛፍ ስር መሰባሰብ የሚችሉበት ዕለት ይናፍቀኛል። ከዚያም ባሻገር ኢትዮጵያዊነት እንዲጠነክርና እንዲያብብ ከልብ እመኛለሁ። ይህን እለት ዘወትር በተስፋ ነው የምጠብቀው።

[I yearn for the day on which the children of Oromia will gather around an Oda tree. And beyond that, I wish Ethiopian nationalism to be strong and to blossom, from my heart. I always look forward to see this day.]

Hawini longs for the coming together of the Oromo people and for the blossoming of Ethiopian nationalism in the country; however, she is in doubt whether this will happen in reality (2000: 460):

ይህ ምኞቴ እንደ ቡርቃ ዝምታ ተረት እየሆነ ሲሄድ ሳይ ግን ልቤ ይደማል

[But when I see that my wishes are becoming like the myth of the Burqa River, my heart bleeds.]

Generally, in connection with the question of unity, different outlooks have been reflected in all the three novels. One promotes the unity of Ethiopia through development, while another group gives priority to the rights of the ethnic people, nations and nationalities to self determination. For the second group which supports

nationality rights, the unity of Ethiopia can come with the will of the different ethnic groups; however, the character Hawini doubts its practicality. In reality, the EPRDF government promotes the second one, unity based on the will of ethnic groups.

The politics of unity and development in the novels *Dertogada* and *Ramatohara* is connected with engineer Kitaw Edjigu, the founder and chairman of the political organization called, Ethiopian National United Front (ENUF) that has declared war against the ruling party. In fact, *Dertogada* is dedicated to the engineer. The real Kitaw is represented in the novel as engineer Shagiz Edjigu. Yet, one sees that the character Shagiz represents the real life of Kitaw Edjigu.²⁶

The engineer involved himself in politics, because he considered the EPRDF as a threat to the unity of Ethiopia, and as a front that would never transfer power through ballot paper. Therefore, he envisioned a progressive and united Ethiopia by overthrowing the EPRDF through bullets, and for this mission he founded the ENUF. Qitaw, according to the journals (*‘Ītop’*, no. 045/95, March, 2003; *Lisanä Hizib*, Vol. 1, No.1, 2004 (1996 E.C.) was ambitious to see united Ethiopia developed in science and technology through the knowledge and skills of Ethiopians and the existing resources. Ethiopia should call back her skilled Diaspora who work in science and research institutes in the developed countries and use their skills to bring about development and unity. In connection with this, the real engineer Qitaw made a speech emphasising that "Ethiopia will develop properly only if the current government implements economic program by inviting and using the skilled Ethiopians from all over the world; otherwise, there cannot be any substantial development in the country" (International Organization for Migration (Geneva), October 1995).

²⁶ The real Kitaw Edjigu was a space scientist and an engineer in NASA. His life experience is reflected in the interviews he made in different Amharic Journals, *‘Ītop’*, no. 045/95, March, 2003; *Lisanä Hizib*, Vol. 1, No.1, 2004. Like Kitaw, the character, Shagiz, is a space scientist and engineer in NASA. He was born in Bonga, south-western Ethiopia and was schooled there (Jimma), and Bahir Dar Polytechnic Institute; later he got further education in Japan and America. He studied space science in America and became one of the most prominent scientists in NASA. He was chief engineer of Aero Soft Engineering. He married an American Israeli and was involved in Ethiopian politics. He died of haemorrhage, brain injury while he was playing basketball.

Likewise, in *Dertogada* and *Ramatohara*, the scientist character, Shagiz, is ambitious to come to his home country and give professional help to Ethiopia. He wanted to bring about unity among the people, and help Ethiopia grow using its skilled people and natural resources. Accordingly, the characters, engineer Gera, Dr. Jangida, Dr. Miraj, Colonel Fisseha and other specialists who were working in American, Japanese, Iranian, Indian and Korean research institutes, satellite stations and air forces came back to Ethiopia and joined the research institute, Dertogada. One of the coordinators of this institution is Engineer Shagiz. The characters firmly believe that the unity of Ethiopia can be achieved through industrial and scientific development in the country. Dertogada and Ramatohara work for the realization of this.

The two novels deal with the details of the character as a scientist; it is only on some pages that his involvement in armed struggle in the state politics of Ethiopia is represented (2009: 87, 102, 104; 2010: 118). In *Dertogada*, for instance, the CIA agent, Meroda, tells Miraj that Engineer Shagiz is wanted by the Ethiopian security for his involvement in Ethiopian politics as follows (2009: 87) :

“የኢትዮጵያ የደህንነት ሰዎችም እየተከታተሉት ነው።”
 “የኢትዮጵያ የደህንነት ሰዎች?”
 “አዎ የኢትዮጵያ የደህንነት ሰዎች።”
 “ለምድን ነው የሚፈልጉት እነሱ ደግሞ?”
 “ሊያስወግዱት ይፈልጋሉ።”
 “የፈጣሪ ያለህ ለምን?”
 “ሰውየው በኢትዮጵያ ፖለቲካ ውስጥ እጁን አስገብቷል።”
 “እና ቢያስገባስ ሀገሩ አይደለች እንዴት?...ደግሞ እኮ አባብለው ሊይዙት የሚገባ ሰው ነው። ምንም አይነት የፖለቲካ አመለካከት ይኑረው ሀገሪቷ ተቀብላ እውቀቱን መጠቀም አለባት። አመለካከቱ የግሉ ነው። ... እንዴት የሀገሩ ልጆች ለመግደል ያድኑታል?”
 “አልገባህም በቃ...”
 “የጀመረው የፖለቲካ ትግል ሰላማዊ ትግል አይደለም። ጦርነት አውጇል። ይህን ነው እያልኩህ ያለሁት።...በጥጉ ያሉ ሰዎች የገፋፉት ይመስለኛል።”
 “እስካሁን ከተለያዩ የሰለጠኑ ሀገራት ዘመናዊ የቴክኖሎጂ መሳሪያዎችን በድብቅ መግዛቱን ደርሰውበታል። በተለያዩ ሀገራት የህክምና የምህንድስና እና ወታደራዊ መሳሪያዎችን ሳይቀር መግዛቱን እንደደረሱበት...”

[“The Ethiopian security people are following him”
 “Are you saying, the Ethiopian security people?”
 “Yes, the Ethiopian security people.”
 “Why do they want him?”
 “They want to eliminate him”

“Oh God, why?”

“The man has interfered in Ethiopian politics”

“So what! Is it not his country? ... Moreover, he is a man that they should handle wisely. Whatever political outlook he has, the country must welcome him and use his knowledge. His political outlook is his personal matter...how do his own people want to kill him? ”

“You don’t understand the situation; the politics he runs is not peaceful politics. He has declared war. ... I think some people around him have pushed him. So far, they have discovered that he has bought modern medical, military, engineering tools and armaments from different developed countries.]

The narrator further reports that the Ethiopian government wants to eliminate the engineer secretly; if done openly, people might condemn his assassination (2009: 104). However, contrary to the wishes of the government, the character, Miraj, in his dialogue with Shagiz tells him how important he is to Ethiopia (2009: 82):

የዚያችን ደሀ ሀገር ችግር ለመፍታት በተነሳህበት ወቅት የገጠመህ አስቸጋሪ ጉዳይ የግልህ ብቻ ሳይሆን ሀገሪቷን እንወዳለን የሚሉትንም ይመለከታል። ለአሜሪካ የሠራቀውን ሩቡን ያህል እንኳ ያች ደሀ አገር ትፈልጋለች። ሀገሪቷን የረቂቅ የቴክኖሎጂ ባለቤት ማድረግ የሚቻለው እንዳንተ ያሉ የቴክኖሎጂ ሰዎች ተባብረው ከተነሱላት ነው።

[The problem that you encountered while trying to solve the problems of this country is not only your problem; it concerns every Ethiopian who loves the country. Your poor country needs one quarter of the job that you have done to America. The country can be made to own sophisticated technology only when people like you co-operate.]

Therefore, yismaeke’s novels suggest the need for calling back the Ethiopian Diaspora home, to contribute to the development of their country, and the achievement of unity through development and science.

6.2.5. Condemnation of the Past

It is a usual observation that contemporary governments condemn the preceeding ones. This is one political topic that is dealt within the novels under discussion. The Darg undermined Haileselassie, and in turn, EPRDF condemns the Darg. Every system is observed to criticize the previous government’s systems of politics and education, and the constitution, law, currency and designs of the flag. Sometimes, infrastructures, statues erected as memorials have been destroyed (Wondwoson, 2008: 13 & 2010: 108). For instance, the symbol on the Ethiopian flag during

Haileselassie's government was a lion carrying a cross. Then the lion was left out during the Darg period. The EPRDF, in turn, put the symbol of a star at the center of the flag. The Darg eliminated the statues of Haileselassie from different places. Names of schools, hospitals, theatre halls, buildings, avenues that were called after Haileselassie and the royal family were changed. A new constitution was written and a new system of government was put in place. Likewise, a new constitution was written when EPRDF came to power, and the education system also changed. Names of schools and avenues were also changed. The organizations, *Dertogada* and *Ramatohara*, from which the titles of the novels are taken, were established with the aim of laying the foundation for permanent and basic development programs that cannot be affected due to changes in government (2009: 196 - 197, 219).

The novel, *Ramatohara*, criticizes the EPRDF government for erecting statues in memory of the EPRDF fighters. The characters in the novel condemn the act saying that the war was among Ethiopians, and the victims are all Ethiopians, and not one particular political group, EPRDF (2010: 107 - 108). The characters share the feeling that the monuments erected for the EPRDF fighters could have the potential to generate feelings of vengeance against the EPRDF, and could divide the different peoples of Ethiopia (2010: 109).

In *Ramatohara*, the issue of statue is further reflected in connection with Maichew war that took place six decades before. While touring around Gorgora, Miraj and Jangida saw and commented on the statue of Mussolini, and the name of the mountain called 'Mussolini'. The statue of Mussolini which is almost 50 meters high, according to the novel, is found on the plateau called Mussolini, not far from Gorgora. The characters condemn all the Haileselassie, the Darg and the EPRDF governments for not demolishing the statue. Miraj criticizes the incumbent, EPRDF government for its lack of interest to demolish the statue of Mussolini (2010: 108). Miraj further criticizes all the governments for not constructing statues for Ethiopian Emperors like Fasil and Tewodros, and for patriots like Abdisa Aga, who are still the symbols of unity (2010: 107, 108).

Miraj's call for erecting memorials for important Ethiopian figures, and his criticism of failing to demolish the statue of Mussolini found in Gorgora seems to be contradictory and debatable, because the statue represents part of the history of

Ethiopia's war with Italy. It is a statue of an individual fascist who was responsible for the death and agony of many Ethiopians. Whether the criticism is right or wrong, the novels reflected real practices in the country and the governments in question.

6.2.6. Issue of Democracy, Equality and Corruption

Democracy is an issue that is represented in the novels. Since the organization, Dertogada, is established by volunteer scientists, there are no undemocratic relationships observed among the members of the organization. But the reason for the establishment of the Dertogada, and the involvement of Shagiz, who represents the real life person, Kitaw, the organization's leader who is wanted by the EPRDF, seem to imply the lack of democracy in Ethiopia during the EPRDF government.

The absence of democracy is reflected in the dialogue made between Mormodino and Diola where the former compares the Ethiopian officials to 'Mafia' gangs. According to Mormordino, the Sicilians are ruled by the unwritten law of the Mafia, while the Ethiopian people are ruled by a written constitution that does not govern the rulers (2009: 242). It is for this reason that the novel shows the involvement of a corrupted minister in a fake business investment by Mormordino (2009: 68).

The politics of the lack of democracy in the Darg government is also reflected in *Dertogada* when one sees what happened to the characters, Miraj and Jangida. Both joined the national military service without their will. As described earlier in this chapter, Miraj was taken from streets, while Jangida was picked from home while enjoying his graduation ceremony (2009: 68). The narrator in the novel even explains that reading novels and books that dealt with psychology, history and philosophy in the military camp was prohibited. The only kind of books allowed for reading were those related to Marxism and socialism. Therefore, Jangida purposefully detached and burned the cover pages of the books that he wanted to read; he also wrote on them new titles related to socialism, Marxism or Leninism (2009: 69, 108). What happened to Jangida implies the influence of the context i.e. the politics and the discursive practice not only has its influence upon authors, but also upon the dissemination of books, and upon readers, because they are not free to read what ever they want. The issue of the dissemination of books and the freedom of reading conforms with the system theorists' belief that the political context has influence on the production, circulation, dissemination and reading of texts (Zekye, n.d.: 62).

The democratic culture of the EPRDF, especially during the war is very surprising as represented in *Yäburqa Zimīta*. No special privilege is given to the leaders. All the leaders and the ordinary guerrilla fighters lead the same life. They have love and respect among each other, irrespective of their ethnic belongingness. They evaluate each other with full confidence. They handle war captives humanly. This is reflected in almost all the chapters of the novel which deal with the guerrilla war that the TPLF and the EPRDF conducted (for instance, *Yäburqa Zimīta*, 2000: 253 - 255).

Democracy and equality among different ethnic and religious groups are also observed in the novels, *Dertogada* and *Ramatohara*. All the members of the Dertogada and Ramatohara organizations are seen working for the development of the country, irrespective of their religious and ethnic background. As explained in the preceding sections, some of the characters in the novels are Jewish, others are Muslims and the rest are Orthodox and atheists. Moreover, some of them are Amharas, and some others are Tigres and Oromos. Some of them are old and some others are young. Irrespective of their differences, they respect each other; they work for one goal, for the development of the country.

On the contrary, the Darg is represented as undemocratic government in all the three selected novels of the EPRDF, especially in *Yäburqa Zimīta*. The EPRDF and other fronts fought the Darg for it was undemocratic. It was not only the Tigray people who rebelled against the Darg, but also the Amharas and the Oromos. The Darg was defeated due to prevalence of undemocratic situations within its own organization. The army and some members of the Darg were isolated from the people, because they committed crimes against the civilians. They killed, robbed, raped and did whatever they wanted; no one dare ask them. It is even reported in the novel that the Darg army forced the Eritrean militia who were fighting for it against the Shabia, to take the first line during wars, while the non Eritreans fought from behind (2000: 162 - 167).

The other theme represented in the novels that belonged to this period is corruption. Corruption is reflected in *Dertogada* through the character, Don Mormordino, an Italian investor. The investment was fake. The main target was to find treasure, gold and silver that was buried deep in Lake Tana by the Italians, when they left the country six decades before. The agreement signed between Don Mormordino and the Ethiopian government, under the cover of investment was broadcast on public media,

but gave no details. One minister was involved in this fake business, because he was bribed by Don. In connection to corruption, Shagiz says the following in his conversation with Miraj (2009: 107):

ኢትዮጵያን ለመመንተፍ በኢንቨስተር ስምና በተለያዩ የረድኤት ድርጅቶች የተሰገሰጉ ወንበዴዎች ህዝቡን በስብሰባና በፎረም ቁጭ አድርገው እያንጫጨፍ እነሱ ሥራቸውን ከሙስና ባለሥልጣኖቻችን ጋር በሽርክና ይሠራሉ። ምናልባት የኢትዮጵያን ጉዳይ ዕለት በዕለት የምተከታተል ከሆነ

[If you have recent information about Ethiopia, the so called investors and NGOs enter the country in the name of investment and in collaboration with some corrupt officials rob the country, while they keep the people shouting for nothing in different forums and meetings.]

Loan agreements which were signed between the Ethiopian ministers and foreign lenders are also touched in the novel. Shagiz raises this enormous problem in his dialogue with Miraj. He says that the country is borrowing a huge amount of money from different sources (2009: 107):

የኢትዮጵያ መሪዎች በየቀኑ ብድር ይፈራረማሉ። ባለስልጣናቱ የብድር ሥምምነት ሳይፈራረሙ የሚውሉበት ቀን የለም። ኢትዮጵያ መጭው ትውልድ ከፍሎ የማይጨርስው ብድር ተበድራለች። እያንዳንዱ ወጣት እያንዳንዱ ታዳጊ የሚወርሰው ሌላ ነገር የለም። ቀጣዩ ትውልድ የሚወርሰው የትየሌለ ዕዳ ብቻ ነው ።

[Every day, Ethiopian leaders sign loan agreements. There is no single day when the officials do not sign such agreements. Ethiopia has borrowed a lot of money that the next generation can not pay back. There is nothing that the new generation will inherit; it will inherit only a huge amount of debts.]

In relation to corruption, *Yäburqa Zimīta* also reflects the decadence of some EPRDF officials. In reality, the EPRDF appointed its men as higher officials in the government structure. However, some of these people were found to be inefficient, corrupt and caused trouble to the organization and the people. In connection with this, Paulos writes that the then prime minister, Meles Zenawi, had posed the problem in one of the meetings of the front (2003: 17):

The secondary problem according to Meles's speech was bringing about a solution to the internal problems of all those engaged in governing since 1991. This involved a deviation from the original course of socialist reconstruction, involvement in corruption, and the tendency of the entire leadership of the TPLF and the EPRDF to adapt dictatorial and bourgeois attitudes.

Such kinds of corruption and adoption of dictatorial attitudes are represented in the novel by the behaviours of two characters, Solomon Dissasa, chairman of the OPDO (2000: 316 - 324) and Mahfere, a former guerrilla fighter of TPLF. Solomon is a corrupt official who is involved in financial and sexual scandal. So is Mahfere. Mahfere is a corrupt official who abandoned his former wife who was a guerrilla fighter, and got married to a young city girl. The following extract is the narrator's report of the conversation of Hayelom and Hawini about corruption and dictatorial attitude that prevailed in the EPRDF (2000: 413):

ኢህአዴግ በአመራር ደረጃ ግምገማ አድርጎ የኢህአዴግ አባላት ወደ አደገኛ የግለሻነት አመለካከት በማምራት ላይ መሆናቸው መቀመጡ ይህ ካልተገታ ግን ድርጅቱ ለህልውናው እንደሚያስጋው አመራሩ ማመኑን ዘርዘሮ ገለጸላት፤ በድርጅቱ የተንሰራፋውን የግለሻነት የስልጣን ጥም ትምክህትና የጠባብነት አመለካከቶች ለማስወገድ ለአንድ ወር ያህል የሚዘልቅ ስርነቀል ግምገማ ለማድረግ ከፍተኛ ዝግጅት እየተደረገ መሆኑን ጭምር አጫወታት፡፡

በቀጣዩ ሁለት ወራት ውስጥ የሚካሄደው ግምገማ በድል ካልተጠናቀቀ የኢህአዴግ አወዳደቅ ፈጣን እንደሚሆን አመራሩ እንደሚያምን ጭምር አልሸሸጋትም፡፡

[EPRDF has reached a consensus that individualism is widespread amongst its members; it is dangerous for the organization unless the problem is stopped. To solve the problems of individualism, lust for power, chauvinism and ethnocentrism, the EPRDF has arranged to make an evaluation program which will last for a month.

If the evaluation program is not successful, the leaders believe that EPRDF will collapse soon.]

Although Hayelom, a high figure of the EPRDF, and whose biography Hawini wants to write, explains the prevalence of corruption among the party members, he himself is presented as a corrupt person in the novel. He arranges a daring escape for Anole, perhaps because of his attachment to Hawini. Hayelom is given a task to lead the army to Burqa, to handle the conflict that arose between Oromos and Amharas. Anole, who is presented as the leader of the rebel group, and who had robbed the rich Amharas more than two millions Birr (Ethiopian currency) is not willing to surrender to Hayelom. But, Hayelom in the end helps Anole to escape, without the knowledge of the EPRDF. This could also be considered as some kind of corruption. The situation is described by the narrator (2000: 447):

ምንክልባት ሃየሎም ጉዳዩን በሚስጢር ለመያዝ የተገደደው የድርጅቱን መመሪያ ጥሶ የፈጸመው ድርጊት ሆኖ ሊሆን እንደሚችል እገምታለሁ

[Hayelom was forced to keep the issue secret, perhaps for he did it in violation of the rules of the organization.]

The death of the real person, Hayelom, who was shot by an ordinary person in an ordinary place, might show some moral or/and political problem on the part of both the killers and the dead, and perhaps on the EPRDF (2000: 5 - 11). In this regard, the editorial narrator (perhaps the novelist) states (2000: 6), “እነሆ ኢትዮጵያዊ ጀግና ሃየሎም አርአያ በተራ ግለሰብ ድንገት ወደቀ” [The Ethiopian hero, Hayelom Araya, was accidentally killed by an ordinary person]. According to Paulos (2003), the killing of Hayelom does not seem to be accidental. It seems rather a political intrigue. Paulos writes, “General Hayelom was assassinated under mysterious circumstances. The person arrested in connection with the assassination (Yassin) was speedily sent to the firing squad. And an individual assigned to investigate the assassination was himself gunned down while he was on a mission to Nairobi” (2003: 19). On the contrary, for the novelist (Tesfaye, *Yägazet’ännaw Mastawäša*, 2009: 380 - 382), the killing of Hayelom is accidental. Yasin killed Hayelom by accident, and was driven by drugs and alcohol drinks. Therefore, it is likely that the assassination of Hayelom shows moral decadence and political problems in the EPRDF.

Anole is also exposed to corruption, though his corrupted personality is not revealed explicitly. As mentioned earlier (in chapter 6.2.1.) Anole co-operates with the Shabia people in helping Abrha Tselote, who was one of the key men of the EPLF, break prison, and in return, Shabia helps Anole to go to Germany. Anole co-operates with the demands of the EPLF for he has been told that he is wanted by the Darg. The truth, however, was that the Darg government did not suspect and spy on Anole. It was only a creation of the EPLF to make Anole co-operate with them in getting Abrha break from prison. They knew that Anole had access to talk to the prisoners. Anole on another occasion also robbed the Amhara people in the name of the Burqa and the Oromo people.

6.3. Conclusion

The three novels, *Yäburqa Zimīta* (2000), *Dertogada* (2009) and *Ramatohara* (2010) are contemporaneous literary works written and published during the EPRDF government. The novels reflected major historical and political events that took place during the reigns of the two governments, the Darg and the EPRDF. The military confrontation between the Darg and opposition groups such as the EPLF and the current EPRDF, the airlifting of the Beta Israel people, the ethnic politics, the tradition of condemning the past, corruption, etc are reflected in details or briefly, depending on the context.

The politics are not only represented explicitly through the dialogues of characters or the words of the narrators, but also are implicitly understood from the actions of characters. Moreover, the flow of the stories in the novels and the deconstructions of the language (as it can be seen from the analyses made on the descriptions of the setting (the dawn and the moon, found at the epilogue of the novel, *Yäburqa Zimīta*) help in understanding the politics that is revealed in them.

The writer of *Yäburqa Zimīta*, was captured by the EPRDF forces in the war, and later served as a press officer when the front came to power. The novel is a reflection of what he himself observed and what he heard. The novel witnessed the sacrifice made to overthrow the Darg government, the love and respect that existed among the members of the EPRDF fighters. But, the novel does not only show the good sides of the EPRDF, but is also presented as a critique. It criticized some weaknesses such as nepotism, corruption, and moral decadence observed among the members of the EPRDF. Besides, the editorial narrator (the author) and some of the characters reflect lose of confidence in the EPRDF in continuing its democratic culture, and they suspect that the EPRDF could not bring democracy in the country in general, and in Oromia in particular.

The analyses and interpretations made on the three novels showed that they are critical of different political events of the Darg and the EPRDF governments. Despite their critical stands, however, the publication of the novels contemporaneously was not prohibited. *Dertogada* was even published at least five times within a year. The author has also continued writing critique novels such as *Žantožara* (2012). In fact,

the provisions of Article 29 of the 1995 constitution with respect to freedom of writing and publication seem to be enjoyed by writers and readers writing on and reading whatever topics or issues.

However, some sensitive political events like the Eritrean referendum and secession, the Badme conflict, and Bonapartism which was the cause for purging some important figures of the TPLF like, Gebru Asrat, Siye Abrha and Alemseged Gebreamlak from the front were not reflected in the novels (even in other novels). Big political issues like the 2005 election were touched but not discussed in detail. According to Fairclough (1995: 5), “textual analysis can often give excellent insights about what is in a text, but what is absent from a text is often just as significant from the perspective of socio cultural analysis.” Therefore, the fact that vital issues like the Eritrean referendum and secession, the Badme conflict, and the politics of Bonapartism which was used as a reason for purging some important TPLF figures from the front have not been represented possibly reveals some kind of unhealthy relationships prevalent in the discursive practices of the related fields of literature and politics. Had the writers not been influenced by the politics, or had they not censored themselves, the sensitive political events mentioned above could likely have been represented in some ways in the novels.

Differences have been observed in the ways ethnicity was represented in the novels written by the two authors. For example, *Yäburqa Zimīta* seems to encourage ethnic based politics and Oromo tribalism and denounces the “näfit’ä★a” (the Amhara people) on the one hand; on the other, the novel seems to advocate unity and respect among different ethnic groups (see 6.2.3 and 6.2.4). However, ethnicity is not the main concern of Yismaeke’s two novels. But still they touched the issue and discouraged narrow ethnic sentiments, while acknowledged ethnic differences. His novels mainly advocate unity through development.

Dertogada and *Ramatohara* promote the unity of Ethiopians, and the respect for different ethnic, religious and historical figures (like Emperor Tewodros and Menilik, the patriot, Abdisa Aga, the martyr, Abune Petros, and the writer, Tsegaye Gebre Medhin). The novels further note the need for erecting statues for such historical figures, rather than for guerrilla fighters of one particular political group that did not represent all the people of Ethiopia. For the novels, erecting statues for guerrilla

fighters would provoke anger and vengeance, rather than love and respect, because it was Ethiopian children who lost their lives in the war, not any one particular political group. The novels further promote unity through the development of civilization, science and research. They insist that unity could come when the economic, political and human developments become real, when cross-country roads and railways constructed, and when commerce is expanded. Only then, the novels note, can the different ethnic groups be united without any political pressure.

According to *Yäburqa Zimīta*, it is contempt, suspicion and vengeance among different ethnic groups, especially between Amharas and Oromos, rather than unity that seems to be transmitted to posterity. In the novel, the Oromo youth are made to remember the past as a period when Oromos were suppressed and colonized, and therefore are instigated to fight for revenge and supremacy.

Yäburqa Zimīta shows no respect to authors, Kidanewold Kifle, the writer of the dictionary of Amharic, and Aba Bahiri, the writer of *Zena Galla*, and to the religious book, *Räiyä Mariyam* for the meaning and “the explanations they gave” on the word “Galla (see chapter 6.2.3.).” This is in line with the New Historicism’s idea that the context in which reading takes place has its own significance in understanding a text. The literary text could also be influenced by the context in which the literature is produced and consumed (Tyson, 2006: 294 - 295). In this regard, the word ‘Galla’, both in writing and oral discourses, has become derogatory especially after the 1974 revolution. Today, the use of the word, in most discourses, can be considered as an insult. But, at the time when *Zena Galla* and *Räiyä Mariyam* were written (before two or three centuries and the dictionary was written before six or seven decades) the use of the term might have been normal. Similarly, the word, ‘näfit’ä★a’ that the EPRDF sometimes uses to refer to the Amharas and Amhara political organizations, is derogatory and is considered as an insult. The words, ‘Galla’ and ‘näfit’ä★a’, further revealed some form of racial and political ideologies towards the ethnic groups, Oromos and Amharas, respectively.

The two novels, *Dertogada* and *Ramatohara* are optimistic about the future. The characters are seen trying to work for the development of the country. Science and research organizations that could work for the sustainable development of the country are established to bring about development. On the contrary, *Yäburqa Zimīta* shows

pessimistic views about the future. The Oromo tribalist character is not confident that EPRDF could bring change for the Oromo people in particular, and the whole country in general. Anole and the editorial narrator/author regard the EPRDF as a fake organization that breaths with the lung of the TPLF. To them, the EPRDF allied organizations were founded by TPLF through its war captives who were instructed to run its agenda among the different ethnic groups in Ethiopia. Therefore, the TPLF is presented as the new “**ንፍጥኛ**” (“näfit’äña”) [one who rules with gun] which decides the fate of the Oromo people through its puppet Oromo organization, OPDO (Tesfaye, 2009: 62). Hence, the Oromo people are not free to use their right to self determination. Accordingly, the character and the editorial narrator/ author believe that the Oromo people should fight the new ‘näfit’ä★as’ and attain their freedom.

Dertogada and *Ramatohara* used the life experience of the famous scientist to complicate the story and the plot of the novel and the political themes. The novels represent the scientist as a character named, Shagiz Ejigu; indeed, it is not difficult to recognize him from the story. Likewise, the novel, *Yäburqa Zimäta* used the myth of “Yäburqa Zimäta” (the silence of Burqa) to complicate the story and the subject of the novel. One of the main characters, as the author says, is also a portrait of the OLF leader, Lencho Leta. *Yäburqa Zimäta* used symbols to reflect some political issues. The Burqa River, the Burqa Plateau, the Oda and the lamp, and the description of dawn in the epilogue are used as symbols that further reveal political issues.

All the three selected novels do seem to be critical of different political issues related to the EPRDF period. None of the novels and the characters portrayed in them appears to be apologist. There is no significant “wudasse” (praise) given to real individual leaders or other key figures. If there is a special significance given in *Yäburqa Zimäta*, it refers to General Hayelom, whose ability of guerrilla leadership and his personal traits of being ‘humble’ and ‘communicative’ are shown through Hawini, the character who tried to write the story of the armed struggle through the history and experience of Hayelom. However, her informants rejected her plan and advised her to write the history of the war focussing on the masses of the guerrilla fighters rather than centring on individuals. Irrespective of this, however, Hayelom is given a significant position and coverage in the novel.

The point raised in *Yäburqa Zimīta* with regard to the significance of writing history based on the experiences of ordinary people is different from the traditional way of writing history centring on important figures and leaders. It could be recalled here that the novels of the Haileselasie period, especially those which focused on Maichew, followed the routes that Haileselassie travelled. However, in *Yäburqa Zimīta* Hayelom, himself, is not interested in telling his heroic experiences to Hawini, because he believes that it is the history of the guerrilla fighters, and not of individual warriors.

There are some striking differences between the selected novels of the three governments with regard to the representations of their respective political events. Most of the selected novels of the Haileselassie and Darg times are apologist, while the novels of the EPRDF period are critical in their presentations. No selected novel of the EPRDF period is dedicated to the ruling front or its leaders. Contrary to this, *Dertogada* is dedicated to the leader of the armed opposition political front, ENUF, Qitaw Ejigu. Some of the protagonist characters of *Dertogada* and *Yäburqa Zimīta* also represent opposition party leaders.

Freedom of expression and literary work seem to have more room in the EPRDF government than the Darg and the Imperial governments could accommodate. It has been possible to freely read novels that are critical of the politics of the EPRDF, and which deal with ethnic conflict, something unseen in the previous governments. The amount of freedom that EPRDF gave to the publication of critique novels could be weighed against the number of times in which *Dertogada* was published. Compared to this, the publication of *Aliwäladim* in Haileselassie period, and, *Oromay*, in the Darg period, is nothing.

The novels written in the EPRDF period criticize the politics of the contemporary government overtly and boldly, different from the previous governments. Most of the critique novels of the Haileselassie regime criticized the administration implicitly, using symbols and allusions. But still, writers like Bealu Girma was assassinated or made extinct, because of his criticism of the Darg period. Abe who has been detained during the Imperial government was ultimately killed during the Darg government in a contentious situation.

The novels written during the Imperial and the EPRDF governments seem to be conscious of the power that literature has in bringing about socio political and economic changes in society. *Ariaya* for instance acknowledges the existence of social, political and economic problems during the Imperial government, and suggests that expansion of schools, revision of the constitution, and appointing local people as administrators could help in solving the problems. The novels in the EPRDF government, as seen in the two novels by Yismaeke, preach that hard work and cooperation are decisive for a sustainable development of the country.

The selected novels of the EPRDF period, like some selected novels of the Haileselassie government make prediction about the future. *Dertogada* and *Ramatohara* predict the strong unity of Ethiopia through socio economic development. They emphasize that some technological advancements such as constructing cross country railroads, invention of sophisticated technology like the “Der 38”, an all-in-one apparatus that can be used as an airplane, automobile or a submarine, and the computerized artificial red spy birds would be the stimulus for the unity of the country. At least the cross country rail way is likely to be true in the near future, as the EPRDF government is working on it. *Yäburqa Zimäta*, on the other hand, predicts a dark future unless the EPRDF respects the democratic rights of the Oromo people.

Generally, like the last three chapters (chapter 3, 4 and 5), the analyses and interpretations made in this chapter confirm the basic thoughts and principles of the literary theories of the New Historicism, System Theory and Critical Discourse Analysis selected for the study. The principle of New Historicism, the historicity of texts and the textuality of history has been proved based in the analyses made on the novels, in relating them to contemporary political, legal and historical documents, and vice-versa. The role that novels play in shaping social contexts and the fact that they are, in turn, shaped by context and society has also been understood from our analyses. It was also possible to understand different political, historical and power relationships of the society and the political groups, not only from the direct representation of the novels, but also from interpretations of implicit relationships.

Chapter Seven

Summary and Conclusion

7.1. Summary

This study examined how the politics of Ethiopia (1930 to 2010) has been represented in selected Amharic novels, delimited to three periods: the Haileselassie (1930-1974), the Darg (1974-1991) and the incumbent EPRDF (1991-2010). The general objective of the research was to investigate the representation of Ethiopian politics in the selected Amharic novels. The specific objectives focused on identifying what political events were represented, inquiring when and how the political events were represented, analyzing the patterns of the representations along the periods, and examining the influences of the politics on the representations of the novels and conversely the novels upon the political and historical contexts. This study posed a general research question – how could the representations of the politics of Ethiopia in Amharic novels be explained? Three theoretical approaches were used in the analyses and interpretations of the identified political events, namely, New Historicism, Bourdieu's System Theory and Critical Discourse Analysis. As the theories share some values in common, the study used a mix of ideas taken from each.

The three critical theories made it possible to analyze and interpret the novels and to address the research questions raised in the study. With regard to the first research question, which asked for the specific political events represented in the selected novels, the major ones that happened during the three governments have been identified. Accordingly, the formation of central government and the unity of the country, the expansion of schools, the Wal Wal and Maichew conflicts, the restoration of freedom after the defeat of Italy and the progress and hope that prevailed, the deprivation of the southern Ethiopia people from their land, the decline of Haileselassie's government, and the growing opposition have been identified as represented in the novels of the Haileselassie period. There were some political events that were either under-represented or totally un-represented in the novels selected for discussion. For instance, coups, especially the 1953 aborted coup were not represented in the novels, while the Eritrean problem was under-represented or only touched in such novels like *Agazi*.

The novels that dealt with the Darg period reflected issues related to the eruption of the 1974 Revolution, the coming of the Darg to power, the change made on land acquisition and private ownership of financial and other private enterprises, the declaration on extra urban houses, the power competition between the Darg officials and the different political organizations, the Somali invasion, the Red Terror and the Red Star Multifaceted Campaign, and issues revolving round democracy and corruption.

Among the selected novels, *Yäburqa Zimīta*, *Dertogada* and *Ramatohara* dealt with the politics of the EPRDF, related to problems of ethnicity, political parties, and Ethiopian nationalism; they also wrote denouncing the past, and raised matters related to democracy, equality and corruption. Some political events like the Eritrean referendum, the Ethio-Eritrean border war (the Badme conflict), and factionalism in TPLF were not reflected, while the 2005 election was represented only briefly in *Dertogada* and *Ramatohara*.

All the representations of the political events in the novels were not contemporaneous. Some of the novels were written during the actual period in which the event happened, while some others were published in the post contemporaneous period. For instance, although the airlifting of the Beta Israelis in the Moses operation and the armed struggle of the TPLF/EPRDF took place in the Darg period, they were not raised in the novels written during that period. They are rather represented in detail in the novels published in the EPRDF period. The reasons for the un-representation of the political events in their contemporaneous period could be self-censorship and censorship. The un-represented political events like the referendum and the faction, and the under-represented 2005 election might also be reflected in the future within the political period, or possibly in a forthcoming political period.

It has been observed that there were situations in which the same event was represented using different points of view at different times. A case in point is the battle of Maichew, which has been differently reflected in many contemporaneous and post contemporaneous novels. The novel, *Baša Qīṭaw*, criticized the emperor, especially his exile, while *Agazi* was supportive of him and his exile; for *Baša Qīṭaw*, the exile was an act of self-seeking, while it was a war strategy for *Agazi*. *Arīaya*, the other contemporaneous novel only subtly criticized the exile. So, while most of the

novels written about Haileselassie during the Haileselassie period itself were not critical, the post contemporaneous *Baša Qitaw* boldly criticized the Emperor's act. Similarly, the Red Terror is represented using different points of view. *Maibäl Yabiyot Mäbača* and *Maibäl Yabiyot Magist*, the novels written during the Dar period seem to favour the act of the Red Terror; but, *Anguz* which was written post-contemporaneously is critical of the act.

There were situations in which novels that were critical of the political events of their contemporary governments were banned from circulation. But the same novels were allowed to be republished by the government that followed. For instance, the novel, *Aliwälädim*, was banned and collected from the market in Haileselassie's period, but the author republished the novel when the darg came to power, although the Darg was the cause for the death of the author in the end. Likewise, *Oromay*, a novel by Bealu, was published in the Darg period; however, it was banned 24 hours after staying in the market. The same novel was republished during the EPRDF period, after the fall of the Darg government. These explanations were basic in making the analyses and interpretations of the novels and helped in addressing the research questions: which contemporary novels represented the contemporary political events of their respective governments and which ones represented the political events that happened in the previous period/s? How did the political contexts influence the political discourses of Amharic novels? The analyses and interpretations further indicated the influences that politics can have upon the publication, dissemination, and consumption of novels in particular, and literature in general.

Some of the novels reflect the politics positively, i.e., favouring the political events they represented, while some others depict the politics negatively - criticizing the events they represented. For instance, Agazi, the trilogy (*Maibäl Yabiyot Wazema*, *Maibäl Yabiyot Mäbača*, and *Maibäl Yabiyot Magist*) and *Yäqäy Kokob Tirri* support the political events of the periods (and their respective governments) in which they were published. But *Baša Qitaw*, *Aliwälädim*, *Oromay*, *Anguz*, *Dertogada* and *Ramatohara* criticize the politics of the respective periods and governments. The degree or the manners in which the novels criticize the events are different. Some of the novels which were critical of the period in which they were written, did so subtly and implicitly, while those published post-contemporarily (criticizing the events after

the fall of the governments in question) are bold and overt in their approach. Those novels which overtly criticized political events of their government were banned, and their authors were either detained or made to disappear, as previously explained. The whereabouts of Bealu were unknown because of *Oromay*. Unlike the novels in the Haileselassie and Darg governments, the critique novels published contemporaneously during the incumbent EPRDF period had no limitations on getting published. *Dertogada* which is very critical of the contemporary period was even published for more than six times within a year.

Another point is that many novels that criticized the political events used tropes like symbol and allusion to pass censorship. *Aliwälädim* was an example in this respect. The novel used nameless characters, imaginary settings and indirect allusions to make its point. *Yäburqa Zimäta* also used symbols and allusions to critique the EPRDF government, especially in connection with the right of the Oromo people to self administration. The myth of the Burqa River, the description of dawn in the epilogue of the novel, and the reference to George Orwell's *Animal Farm* (1945:126) that "all animals are equal but some animals are more equal than others", are used to predict the future uprising of the Oromo people because of the EPRDF policy. Unlike *Aliwälädim*, the critique novels, *Dertogada* and *Ramatohara*, criticized the EPRDF government overtly and boldly using plain language.

Both the critique and supportive novels of the government of Haileselassie used biblical allusions heavily, while a little bit of that is used in the selected novels published in the Darg period. One of the reasons for this could be because the ideology which the Darg followed (the socialist ideology) did not encourage religion or perhaps because the authors of that period did not have religious education. There were some references to the Bible in *Dertogada* and *Ramatohara* implying the possibility that the author passed through church education. Hence, all the aforementioned points related to the specific manner in which the novels reflected the political events answered the research questions: how were the specific political events of the Haileselassie, the Darg, and the EPRDF governments represented in the selected Amharic novels? How did the political contexts influence the political discourses of Amharic novels, and how did the novels influence the contexts during the three political periods?

In connection with the second research question above, it could be said that it was not only that the politics shaped the novels, but also the novels themselves shaped the contexts. The novels pointed out the problems that the governments had, and suggested solutions. In some cases, the governments paid attention to the issues raised in the novels. For instance, *Ariaya* suggested the need for revising the constitution and it was done. *Alwäladim* was also believed to have provoked people; the novel forecasted the 1974 revolution thirteen years in advance. *Dertogada* explicitly announced (2009, p. 67-68) that a novelist should show the problems of the people and the governments; *Dertogada* and *Ramatohara* indicate also alternative solutions to the social and political problems that are raised.

With regard to the question of trend, some patterns have been observed in the manners of the representations of the politics in the novels across the three political periods. One clear pattern is that sharp criticisms on events of an earlier political period are usually presented by novels published or republished in the new period (for instance, the critique novels of the Haileselassie government were published or republished in the Darg period; and in turn, the critique novels of the Darg government were published or republished in the EPRDF period); and such novels which are critical of the events of the earlier regime are used by the new governments for their political advantage. For instance, *Baša Qit'aw*, *Yäqäy Kokob T'irri* and the trilogy by Berhanu Zerihun criticize the Haileselassie government, thereby reflecting, excepting the first novel, their support of some of the political events of the Darg government. *Aliwäladim* that was banned from circulation by the Haileselassie government was republished in the Darg period, and the Darg could have used this as a means of denouncing the regime that it toppled; similarly, the novel, *Anguz* that criticized the Darg's Red Terror, and *Oromay*, which was critical of the Darg were published and republished, respectively, during the EPRDF period. As novels that exposed past events, they could be of political advantage to the new government.

Surprisingly, there is no novel that praises a past regime, even being critical of a contemporary government. No novel written during the Darg period supported the Haileselassie period; no novel written during the EPRDF period was neither in favour of the Darg period. This is a major trend that has been observed in the representations of the politics of the novels during all the three periods.

The contemporary critique novels of the Haileselassie and the Darg periods, as mentioned earlier, were banned and the authors ended in detention or just disappeared. Unlike the two previous political periods, the critique novels of the EPRDF period were published or even republished several times. The exception to this was the author of the novel, *Yäburqa Zimäta*, who fled the country, maybe because the novel criticized the EPRDF in relation to the right of the Oromo people. The author may have also some other political motives.

7.2. Conclusion

This study attempted to analyze and interpret the representation of political events written in selected Amharic novels during three political periods in the history of Ethiopia. Based on the findings, the following conclusions are drawn:

1. The novels could be understood as not only mere fictional works of the respective authors, but also as historical and political documents of each period. It could even be said that the novels represented the historical and political realities of the ordinary people, which were mostly ignored in historical studies since the history and political documents usually focus on big figures and macro-level events. The novels reflected different feelings and beliefs of the ordinary people. They further embedded current political and historical events in them and reached much larger readers, something that historical studies usually lack because history usually studies the past and mostly read by historians and interested individuals. Sometimes, the novels represented the historical and political events with more details and from different perspectives, than the historical and political documents which focus on the general political history of the country.

It was possible to witness that the novels had the power to show historical facts, human and class relationships implicitly, through the interactions of characters, story developments, and organization of the whole work. The novels exhibited so much of what has been unsaid in the political and historical documents, through the interactions of characters. Hence, this study could be considered as a historical and political document of 20th century Ethiopia.

2. The analysis of the selected novels confirmed that the literature and the politics influenced one another. The authors, as observed in *Ariaya*, *Aliwälädim* and *Dertogada*, played significant roles in shaping both the politics and the society. They attempted to show the problems and suggested solutions to the problems. Therefore, one could understand that literature was not only a means of entertainment, but also a field of discussions and interactions for the development of the human mind, politics and culture. These explanations confirm the theoretical explanation given by Lewis, Rodgers and Woolcock (2008:209) that literature can offer alternative insights about development processes that are all too often either ignored or depersonalized within academic or policy accounts, as the importance of development for the unity of a country suggested in Yismaeke's novels. It is also obvious that works of literature often reach much larger readers than research reports and other academic writings, and are more influential than academics in shaping public knowledge and understanding of development issues. The manner in which the political environment influences the literature has also been observed in some of the novels such as *Aliwälädim* and *Oromay*.

The findings revealed that the assumptions made based on the theoretical frameworks of the New Historicism, System Theory and Critical Discourse Analysis were true, i.e. it was possible to understand the historicity of literary texts and the textuality of history, and also the embodiment of politics and history in literature. Literature is one field within the system of inter-related fields; literature is always part and parcel of the discursive practice and is influenced by the culture and politics and vice-versa. The analysis made on language use, as with words like ("täsädädu" and "šoläku alu" (see chapter 3.2.2.3.) further showed the power that language can have in showing concealed human and political power relationships. As is assumed in Bourdieu's System Theory, and the Critical Discourse Analysis, some writing techniques²⁷ and the tropes of the novels were found to be significant in representing political events and relationships.

²⁷ The research did not investigate the writing techniques used in the novels, except when they were found to be of some relevance to the main purpose of the study. But from the discussions made on some of the relevant techniques used in some of the

Glossary

Abba- form of title for ordinary priests

Aba Dula - ‘father/chief of war’

Abun - ‘bishop’, the highest ecclesiastical title of the Ethiopian Orthodox church until the appointment of a patriarch in 1959, Abuna when used with a proper noun, as Abuna Petros

Aleqa – head of a church, a learned priest.

Aqabe Shum - in the context of the novel, it refers to the title, prime minister

Ato – equivalent to Mister

*Basha- derivative of the Turkish ‘pasha’ for low level government officials

Beta Israel - Jewish people of Ethiopia

*Dejazmach – ‘commander of the gate’, a politico – military title below Ras

Darg - a name given to the Provisional Military Administrative Council (PMAC)

*Fitawrari – ‘commander of the vanguard’, a title below Dejazmach,

Gada - an age-grade socio-political system of the Oromo

*Gasha – a unit of measurement, equivalent to 40 hectares

Guliča - Clay made material or stone used to put a pan on fire for cooking.

Kebele - is urban dwellers association while higher Kebele is a higher office for a number of Kebeles or urban dwellers association.

*Näfitäña – from raft, rifle, name given to Emperor Menilik’s warrior of northern origin, who later settled in the south.

*Negadras – ‘head of merchants, originally leader of a merchant caravan, later chief government official in charge of the collection of customs.

Negarit - a large drum that is used in the former days to announce urgent national issues and proclamations

Ras – ‘head’. The highest traditional title next to negus

Shum – according to the context of the novel is equivalent to Minister

Step mother – for most Ethiopians a step mother often represents a cruel woman

Tej- a local drink made from honey

Wät’ – a sauce that is eaten usually with enjera, a thinly layered bread like food that is prepared from crushed grains of teff or barely or wheat or sorghum.

Woizero (W/o) – House Lady

novels (see for instance, the discussion made about the portrayal of the characters and setting of *Aliwälädim* (pp. 139 – 140), and *Maibäl Yabiyot Magist* (pp. 160 161), it is possible to say that some writing techniques were found to be significant in representing political events and relationships.

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Appendixes

A Questionnaire to be filled by Amharic Literature Course Instructors

The main purpose of this questionnaire is to collect data regarding the reliability of the selected sample novels for a research titled, “The Representation of Ethiopian Politics in Selected Amharic Novels: 1930 – 2010”. The criteria used in the selection of the samples, and the list of the selected and rejected ones are listed under the politics they represent.

The criteria and the process through which the novels are selected included: in the first step, political events that were considered to be very significant in a given political period were identified, based on readings of historical research works and legal documents. Then, novels in which the identified political events were represented were distinguished. In cases where there were two or more novels that represent a certain political event, the most representative ones were selected. In other words, novels that were believed to have a wider recognition among literary academics and the reading public, and those that were written by more famous and experienced authors, and novels republished several times were selected. In cases where there are novels written by female and male writers about a certain political event, effort has been made to include a representative female author in the list, whether her novel was canonical or not. In some cases, factors like years of publications were considered for the selection of the sample novels, because the temporal change (especially the change in the governments) might bring a change in the representation of the political events. The selection of the novels further considered the political themes or ideas reflected in them- whether they seemed to favour or oppose the respective political regimes.

As a literature course instructor specializing in literary study you are supposed to give valuable comments on the selected novels. I thank you for your willingness and patience to comment on the list of the selected novels.

Preliminary information

University – Bahir Dar University

Sex - Male

Department- Ethiopian Language & literature - Amharic

Qualification - MA

Specialization – Literature

Year of service in teaching – 7 years

Amharic Literature Courses you offered -Introduction to Literature, Amharic Novel, Survey of Ethiopian Literature, Survey of Amharic Literature, Practical Literary Criticism, Literature and human concern

I. Comments on the selected novels:

Below there are a number of novels listed under different political themes of the three political periods; the selected novels are marked as selected in the decision column. Please write your agreement or disagreement on the selected ones in the space given in the remarks column by ticking ✓ or x or commenting. If you feel that the rejected novels from the list are more appropriate to the politics listed, you are well-come to write your comments in the remark column. Even you believe that there are novels which are more proper to the different political issues listed, please indicate the novels either in the remarks column or include it in the additional comment.

No	Title of the novel	Name of the author	decision	Your remarks
The Imperial period: 1930 - 1974				
The pre war (Maichew) Politics				
	<i>Ariaya(1948)</i>	Girmachew T/Hawariyat	Selected	Wright decision
	<i>Agazi(1961²)</i>	Woldegiorgis W/Yohannes	Selected	I am not sure
The Politics of Maychew				
	<i>Ariaya(1948)</i>	Girmachew T/Hawariyat	Selected	Right decision because its focus is on the pre war and war politics
	<i>Agazi(1948²)</i>	Woldegiorgis W/Yohannes	Selected	I don't have objection. But It is a little bit an apologist novel.
	Basha Qitaw(1983)	Sahleselassie B/mariam	Selected	It is a right decision.
	Endewetach Kerech (1956)	Assefa G/mariam		
	Alimotkum Beye Alwashim (1940)	Mekonnen Endalkachew		May be this one is also important
	Yemaychew Kuslegna (1956?)	Mekonnen Zewde		
	Adabay(1984)	Tilahun Tassew		
	Netsanet (1988)	Zenaneh Mekonnen		
	Eskedar(2011).	Dawit W/giorgis		I haven't read it
Post War Politics				
	Ariaya(1948)	Girmachew T/hawariyat	Selected	I am not sure
	Agazi(1948)	Woldegiorgis W/yohannes	Selected	I dont agree
	Aleweledim(1955)	Abe Gubegna	Selected	Right decision
	Adefris(1962)	Dagnachew Worku	Selected	Right decision
	Filmiya(2000)	Ashine Getachew	Selected	Recent novel that deal with old politics
	Maibel Yabiyot Wazema (1971)	Birhanu Zerihun	Selected	Right decision

	The Darg period			
	The revolution, The new land policy, opposing parties			
	Maebel Yabiyot Wazema (1971)	Birhanu Zerihun	Selected	Right decision
	Maebal Yabiyot Mebacha (1983)	Birhanu Zerihun	Selected	Right decision
	Maebel Yabiyot Magist (1983)	Birhanu Zerihun	Selected	Right decision
	The Red Terror, The Somalia Invasion, The Multifaceted Red Star Campaign			
	<i>Yekey Kokob Tiri(1972)</i>	<i>Bealu Girma</i>	Selected	Right decision
	<i>Oromay(1975)</i>	<i>Bealu Girma</i>	Selected	Right decision
	<i>Lekey Ababa()</i>	<i>Tadele G/hiwot</i>		Right but apologist
	<i>Ysedetenoch Sinkesar (2000)</i>	<i>Girma Mekonnen</i>		
	<i>Anguz(1884)</i>	<i>Tsehay Melaku</i>	Selected	Right decision. Representative authoress
	<i>Endaydegem(1994)</i>	<i>Mulugeta Gudeta</i>		I haven't read it. Of course the author is famous.
	<i>Akeldama(1984)</i>	<i>Tewodros Mulatu</i>		I think this deals also with Red terror
	<i>Fikir Bezemene keyshibir (1997)</i>	Mekonnen Gebreegzi		
	<i>Mirkogna(2002)</i>	<i>Konjit Birhan</i>		I haven't read it
	<i>Tamra Tor(1975)</i>	<i>Gebeyehu Ayele</i>	Selected	Right decision
	<i>Zikre 70 (1984)</i>	<i>Kassa Hailemariam</i>		
	The EPRDF Period/The Armed Struggle, Ethnicity, The 2005 election, The Ethio Ertrea war			
	<i>Dertogada(2000)</i>	<i>Yisameke Worku</i>	Selected	Right decision
	<i>Ramatohara (2001)</i>	<i>Yisameke Worku</i>	Selected	Right decision
	<i>Yeburka Zimita (1992)</i>	<i>Tesfaye Gebreab</i>	Selected	Right decision.Its focus is on ethnic politics

Additional Comments

I think your decision is correct. You might include the novel *Tilo Malef* by Abera Lema. The novel focuses on the politics of the Darg.

A Questionnaire to be filled by Amharic Literature Course Instructors

The main purpose of this questionnaire is to collect data regarding the reliability of the selected sample novels for a research titled, “The Representation of Ethiopian Politics in Selected Amharic Novels: 1930 – 2010”. The criteria used in the selection of the samples, and the list of the selected and rejected ones are listed under the politics they represent.

The criteria and the process through which the novels are selected included: in the first step, political events that were considered to be very significant in a given political period were identified, based on readings of historical research works and legal documents. Then, novels in which the identified political events were represented were distinguished. In cases where there were two or more novels that represent a certain political event, the most representative ones were selected. In other words, novels that were believed to have a wider recognition among literary academics and the reading public, and those that were written by more famous and experienced authors, and novels republished several times were selected. In cases where there are novels written by female and male writers about a certain political event, effort has been made to include a representative female author in the list, whether her novel was canonical or not. In some cases, factors like years of publications were considered for the selection of the sample novels, because the temporal change (especially the change in the governments) might bring a change in the representation of the political events. The selection of the novels further considered the political themes or ideas reflected in them- whether they seemed to favour or oppose the respective political regimes.

As a literature course instructor specializing in literary study you are supposed to give valuable comments on the selected novels. I thank you for your willingness and patience to comment on the list of the selected novels.

I. Preliminary information

University – Bahir Dar University

Sex - Female

Department- Ethiopian Language & literature - Amharic

Qualification - MA

Specialization – Literature

Year of service in teaching – 10 years

Amharic Literature Courses you offered – Amharic Poetry, Amharic Novel,
Introduction to Literature, Survey of Amharic Literature, and Workshop on
creative writing

II. Comments on the selected novels:

Below there are a number of novels listed under different political themes of the three political periods; the selected novels are marked as selected in the decision column. Please

write your agreement or disagreement on the selected ones in the space given in the remarks column by ticking ✓ or x or commenting. If you feel that the rejected novels from the list are more appropriate to the politics listed, you are well-come to write your comments in the remark column. Even you believe that there are novels which are more proper to the different political issues listed, please indicate the novels either in the remarks column or include it in the additional comment.

No	Title of the novel	Name of the author	decision	Your remarks
	The Imperial period: 1930 - 1974			
	The pre war (Maichew) Politics			
	<i>Ariaya(1948)</i>	Girmachew T/Hawariyat	Selected	Correct
	<i>Agazi(1961²)</i>	Woldegiorgis W/Yohannes	Selected	I am not sure
	The Politics of Maychew			
	<i>Ariaya(1948)</i>	Girmachew T/Hawariyat	Selected	Correct
	<i>Agazi(1948²)</i>	Woldegiorgis W/Yohannes	Selected	I am not sure
	Basha Qitaw(1983)	Sahleselassie B/mariam	Selected	Correct
	Endewetach Kerech (1956)	Assefa G/mariam		This novel also focuses on the war and prostitution
	Alimotkum Beye Alwashim (1940)	Mekonnen Endalkachew		
	Yemaychew Kuslegna (1956?)	Mekonnen Zewde		
	Adabay(1984)	Tilahun Tassew		
	Netsanet (1988)	Zenaneh Mekonnen		
	Eskedar(2011).	Dawit W/giorgis		
	Post War Politics			
	Ariaya(1948)	Girmachew T/hawariyat	Selected	I don't agree
	Agazi(1948)	Woldegiorgis W/yohannes	Selected	I don't agree
	Aleweledim(1955)	Abe Gubegna	Selected	Correct
	Adefris(1962)	Dagnachew Worku	Selected	Correct
	Filmiya(2000)	Ashine Getachew	Selected	Correct
	Maibel Yabiyot Wazema (1971)	Birhanu Zerihun	Selected	Correct
	The Darg period			
	The revolution, The new land policy, opposing parties			
	Maebel Yabiyot Wazema (1971)	Birhanu Zerihun	Selected	

	Maebal Yabiyot Mebacha (1983)	Birhanu Zerihun	Selected	Correct
	Maebel Yabiyot Magist (1983)	Birhanu Zerihun	Selected	Correct
	The Red Terror, The Somalia Invasion, The Multifaceted Red Star Campaign			
	<i>Yekey Kokob Tiri</i> (1972)	<i>Bealu Girma</i>	Selected	Correct
	<i>Oromay</i> (1975)	<i>Bealu Girma</i>	Selected	Correct. May be the only novel that deal with Red Star Campaign
	<i>Lekey Ababa</i> ()	<i>Tadele G/hiwot</i>		
	<i>Ysedetenoch Sinkesar</i> (2000)	<i>Girma Mekonnen</i>		
	<i>Anguz</i> (1884)	<i>Tsehay Melaku</i>	Selected	Correct! She is also a representative woman
	<i>Endaydegem</i> (1994)	<i>Mulugeta Gudeta</i>		
	<i>Akeldama</i> (1984)	<i>Tewodros Mulatu</i>		I think this one is also a proper novel
	<i>Fikir Bezemene Keyshibir</i> (1997)	Mekonnen Gebreegzi		
	<i>Mirkogna</i> (2002)	<i>Konjit Birhan</i>		I haven't read it
	<i>Tamra Tor</i> (1975)	<i>Gebeyehu Ayele</i>	Selected	Correct
	<i>Zikre 70</i> (1984)	<i>Kassa Hailemariam</i>		This one is also proper.
	The EPRDF Period/The Armed Struggle, Ethnicity, The 2005 election, The Ethio - Eritrea war and the Referendum			
	<i>Dertogada</i> (2000)	<i>Yisameke Worku</i>	Selected	Correct
	<i>Ramatohara</i> (2001)	<i>Yisameke Worku</i>	Selected	Correct
	<i>Yeburka Zimita</i> (1992)	<i>Tesfaye Gebreab</i>	Selected	Correct

Additional Comments

I think it is not simple to give comment on this big issue. However I feel that your decision is good.

A Questionnaire to be filled by Amharic Literature Course Instructors

The main purpose of this questionnaire is to collect data regarding the reliability of the selected sample novels for a research titled, “The Representation of Ethiopian Politics in Selected Amharic Novels: 1930 – 2010”. The criteria used in the selection of the samples, and the list of the selected and rejected ones are listed under the politics they represent.

The criteria and the process through which the novels are selected included: in the first step, political events that were considered to be very significant in a given political period were identified, based on readings of historical research works and legal documents. Then, novels in which the identified political events were represented were distinguished. In cases where there were two or more novels that represent a certain political event, the most representative ones were selected. In other words, novels that were believed to have a wider recognition among literary academics and the reading public, and those that were written by more famous and experienced authors, and novels republished several times were selected. In cases where there are novels written by female and male writers about a certain political event, effort has been made to include a representative female author in the list, whether her novel was canonical or not. In some cases, factors like years of publications were considered for the selection of the sample novels, because the temporal change (especially the change in the governments) might bring a change in the representation of the political events. The selection of the novels further considered the political themes or ideas reflected in them- whether they seemed to favour or oppose the respective political regimes.

As a literature course instructor specializing in literary study you are supposed to give valuable comments on the selected novels. I thank you for your willingness and patience to comment on the list of the selected novels.

I. Preliminary information

University – Dilla University

Sex - Male

Department- Ethiopian Language & literature - Amharic

Qualification - MA

Specialization – Literature

Year of service in teaching – 15 years

Amharic Literature Courses you offered – Amharic Short Story, Drama, Introduction to Folklore, Introduction to Literature, Amharic Novel, Survey of Ethiopian Literature, Survey of Amharic Literature, Literature and human concern, Workshop on creative writing

III. Comments on the selected novels:

Below there are a number of novels listed under different political themes of the three political periods; the selected novels are marked as selected in the decision column. Please write your agreement or disagreement on the selected ones in the space given in the remarks column by ticking ✓ or x or commenting. If you feel that the rejected novels from the list are more appropriate to the politics listed, you are well-come to write your comments in the remark column. Even you believe that there are novels which are more proper to the different political issues listed, please indicate the novels either in the remarks column or include it in the additional comment.

No	Title of the novel	Name of the author	decision	Your remarks
The Imperial period: 1930 - 1974				
The pre war (Maichew) Politics				
	<i>Ariaya(1948)</i>	Girmachew T/Hawariyat	Selected	✓
	<i>Agazi(1961²)</i>	Woldegiorgis W/Yohannes	Selected	
The Politics of Maychew				
	<i>Ariaya(1948)</i>	Girmachew T/Hawariyat	Selected	✓
	<i>Agazi(1948²)</i>	Woldegiorgis W/Yohannes	Selected	
	Basha Qitaw(1983)	Sahleselassie B/mariam	Selected	✓
	Endewetach Kerech (1956)	Assefa G/mariam		
	Alimotkum Beye Alwashim (1940)	Mekonnen Endalkachew		
	Yemaychew Kuslegna (1956?)	Mekonnen Zewde		
	Adabay(1984)	Tilahun Tassew		
	Netsanet (1988)	Zenaneh Mekonnen		These unselected novels are also about the war
	Eskedar(2011).	Dawit W/giorgis		I am not sure
Post War Politics				
	Ariaya(1948)	Girmachew T/hawariyat	Selected	Reconsider
	Agazi(1948)	Woldegiorgis W/yohannes	Selected	I don't agree

	Aleweledim(1955)	Abe Gubegna	Selected	✓
	Adefris(1962)	Dagnachew Worku	Selected	✓
	Filmiya(2000)	Ashine Getachew	Selected	I think this one is his first novel
	Maibel Yabiyot Wazema (1971)	Birhanu Zerihun	Selected	✓
	The Darg period			
	The revolution, The new land policy, opposing parties			
	Maebel Yabiyot Wazema (1971)	Birhanu Zerihun	Selected	✓
	Maebal Yabiyot Mebacha (1983)	Birhanu Zerihun	Selected	✓
	Maebel Yabiyot Magist (1983)	Birhanu Zerihun	Selected	✓
	The Red Terror, The Somalia Invasion, The Multifaceted Red Star Campaign			
	<i>Yekey Kokob Tiri(1972)</i>	<i>Bealu Girma</i>	Selected	✓
	<i>Oromay(1975)</i>	<i>Bealu Girma</i>	Selected	✓
	<i>Lekey Ababa()</i>	<i>Tadele G/hiwot</i>		This one is also good
	<i>Ysedetenoch Sinkesar (2000)</i>	<i>Girma Mekonnen</i>		
	<i>Anguz(1884)</i>	<i>Tsehay Melaku</i>	Selected	✓
	<i>Endaydegem(1994)</i>	<i>Mulugeta Gudeta</i>		
	<i>Akeldama(1984)</i>	<i>Tewodros Mulatu</i>		I read some of these novels; you can include them in your list
	<i>Fikir Bezemene keyshibir (1997)</i>	Mekonnen Gebreegzi		
	<i>Mirkogna(2002)</i>	<i>Konjit Birhan</i>		
	<i>Tamra Tor(1975)</i>	<i>Gebeyehu Ayele</i>	Selected	✓
	<i>Zikre 70 (1984)</i>	<i>Kassa Hailemariam</i>		
	The EPRDF Period/The Armed Struggle, Ethnicity, The 2005 election, The Ethio - Eritrea war and the Referendum			
	<i>Dertogada(2000)</i>	<i>Yisameke Worku</i>	Selected	✓
	<i>Ramatohara (2001)</i>	<i>Yisameke Worku</i>	Selected	✓
	<i>Yeburka Zimita (1992)</i>	<i>Tesfaye Gebreab</i>	Selected	✓

Additional Comments

I definitely agree with most of the selected novels.